

The following are travel notes from a student exchange trip to Czechoslovakia, Poland and Russia in the summer of 1958. They were used to feed back experiences and commentary to Lee Klaer, pastor at Cornell's Westminster Foundation, who organized the exchange. He had sponsored many similar student foreign exchanges having made them part of his duties. He assembled this particular group of twenty Cornell students to reciprocate for a similar tour the previous year by German students associated with the Fridtjof Nansen Haus, Goettingen, Germany. A German group from the Haus joined us for the Czechoslovakia/Poland legs of this tour.

The Cornell students were of various post-graduate and under-graduate backgrounds. Members included:

- |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Barbara Schultz | Karl Kesler        |
| Burt Butler     | Monte Shaw         |
| Dan Wilder      | Pidge Benin        |
| Dave Davis      | Rip Van Camp       |
| Dave Tapley     | Rothenthaler twins |
| Gene Camerik    | Sally Eaton        |
| Jerry Tostevin  | Sally Meikle       |
| Julie Foster    |                    |



**Pioneer Camp:** Eaton Rothenthalers Davis Foster Shaw Wilder Camerik Tapley Ehrlich Schultz Benin

**Saturday, June 20, 10:55AM - Paris**

There are at least two reasons why this first installment will be rather shaky. First, it will be a few installments before I decide on the best format. Second, 20 of us are now riding in 2<sup>nd</sup> class compartments from Paris to Aachen to Cologne to Goettingen, and the vibrations on this *chemin de fer* are like having Parkinson's.

Flight to Shannon: Relatively uneventful. Camerik is sick and everyone else bored and tired. Trip to Paris took 29 hr. Shannon, with its absence of tariffs is the place to buy whisky, American cigarettes, watches (Omega for \$61.00), heavy-knit sweaters (\$9.00), sweepstake tickets (\$2.85) and perfumes cheap (or cheap perfumes?)

London Airport: After 2 box lunches on the plane, the royal treatment at London was welcome. A well-prepared hot meal during the 1-1/2 hr. stopover.

Orly Airport: There was a little confusion at Paris on arrival. Because we were 5 hr. late, The Patra agency (Monsieur Jerusalem, proprietor) that got only a one-hour notice of our arrival was unable to have a bus ready. We needed seven taxis for the group and a problem arose when it became necessary to decide who was to pay for the 2 categories of people – those of the Goettingen (i.e. Cornell) project and those who were not. – the former didn't, the latter did.

Cité Universitaire: Low rates for room & board (\$1.60 per night, \$0.50 per hot meal). About 2/3 of the foreign students in Paris live here. Buildings for dozens of nationalities. The Americas House (1 rue Jourdain) has a capacity of 350.

### **Sunday, June 22 - Paris**

At the Cité Universitaire we had a quick meeting to plan for the tours of the next two days, put 2000 fr. per person as down payment for room keys then broke up to meet for the first tour on the June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Because information concerning the trip had not yet reached Patra, they did not have a tour arranged. Finally, two tours were arranged for Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning. Sunday evening we exchanged dollars for francs at the Air France Terminal at Invalides – the only place in Paris open for this purpose late in the evening. Also, Wilder made a phone call to Florence, Italy from the only place available for this purpose at this hour – the Bourse.

### **Monday, June 23 - Paris**

After a breakfast of croissants and coffee, the group set out for Notre Dame de Paris and spent the morning in this area. We searched out a few small shops in the area and bought baguettes, cheese (a Camembert with character) in bulk and ate it in a nearby park. Cost per person – about 35 cents.

We left a few people behind on the afternoon tour and began to realize the difficulty of managing 20 persons. When we found that the late hours made it difficult for some to get up in time, a "buddy" system was initiated whereby groups of 3 were responsible for one another.

We learned through a friend of Tapley's in the city that through the right contacts, dollars could be exchanged on the black market for 450 to 460 francs as compared to the official rate of 415.8:1.

It also rapidly became evident that the best way to get along with the Frenchman on the street was to try to speak his language, however poorly. Cheerful Sally Eaton became our most voluble ambassador.

In francs or dollars, the 15% tip is obligatory.

The Paris subway system can be mastered rapidly and is the best way to tour the city. The historic sites are clustered around the Champs Élysées and the rue de Rivoli. Bought in lots of 5, subway tokens cost 60 fr. each.

Monday evening saw us (17) at the Folies Bergère for 1250 fr. per head - a highly over-publicized, overrated show at best. Expensive settings and a program catering directly to the tourist. Word has it that the Casino de Paris is similar. The Lido is of the nightclub variety and is more expensive. A few dropped in at the Moulin Rouge and saw a super performance for less than \$3.00. After the Monday

evening show, the group tramped down the colourful Pigalle where the oldest profession in the world (so they say) still flourishes.

On Tuesday, the Louvre, the Comédie Française and the Opéra, are closed.

### Tuesday, June 24 - Paris

The day began with another tour: Sacré Coeur, Napoleon's tomb, tour Eiffel, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Bois de Boulogne, and the Tuileries.

The *église Notre Dame* perhaps gave us an interesting insight. Commercialism is rife. Candles of varying sizes (increasing with price) are sold for 25, 50, 100, francs, etc. Admission is charged to isolated areas of the church. Souvenirs are sold. At the door, where two lines of people pass, one in and the other out, a quaint old nun in costume collects donations from the incoming throng. While we were watching, the lines became mixed, mixing the fledgling entrants with the outgoing, paid customers. At this, the placid old lady became quite perturbed and scolded the people for not keeping an orderly line (thus reducing her take). It is obvious that the tourist trade is an important contributor to the Paris balance sheet.



Tuileries: Keep off the grass

Dan Wilder, our in-house linguist, who speaks no language, and yet speaks all of them, had a fun experience trying to buy apple pie *a la mode* from a sidewalk café near the Bourse. He ended up paying 90 cents for a piece of apricot pie with ice cream drowned in whipped cream.

To end Tuesday, the group shopped at the principal department stores – Le Printemps and Les Galeries Lafayette where Dave Davis bought a “typical” French striped shirt which he subsequently saw on a stylish Parisienne.

Noticeable to the casual American observer (i.e. some team members) is the fraternization of black and white, particularly mixed dates. [JT note: remember, this is 1958, pre Lyndon Johnson]

Tuesday, midnight, saw most of us in *Les Halles* to watch the arrival of the vegetables, meat, fruit at this wholesale gathering point for retail distribution. It was probably the highlight of the Paris stay. The restaurants in the area are noted for their snails (*escargots*) and onion soup that we sampled and found sumptuous. The name of our restaurant - *Le Pied de Cochon* - was one of the better ones. We walked thru the *Les Halles* where we were met with such comments from the workers as “*sentimentale promenade*”.

The de Gaulle riots that made international headlines had left no trace. From the comments of the students at the *Cité Universitaire*, the events were exaggerated in the newspapers.

The group is working hard at obtaining a grasp of as many languages as they can. They politely converse with anyone who will sit and listen. Rip's tape recorder is a big hit with people with whom we cannot communicate at all.

By Tuesday, the whole group was used to each other and well knit. They knew how to handle themselves and entertain themselves. The importance of the right approach to O.B. (the leader of the German trip contingent at the *Fridtjof Nansen Haus*, Goettingen) was discussed today to set us on the right track for our arrival tonight.

**Wednesday, June 25 - Depart Paris**

We are spending all day on the train. What could have been a critical incident occurred today. Bert Butler discovered at the Belgian border that he had left/lost his passport in Paris. He was escorted off the train by the Customs official and was kept in protective custody in France. Later it turned out that after a day of fruitless searching he retraced his steps to a self-service restaurant near l'Opéra. I remembered that walking behind me down the stairs, Bert had slipped and dropped his wallet. He hadn't noticed that his passport had slipped out and fallen through the grating into a potted palm. It had remained unnoticed for 2 days. He caught up to us in Goettingen.

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Lost: Notes from period June 26 to June 29 during which time the group stayed in Goettingen at the Fridtjof Nansen Haus, (Renowned Norwegian explorer, diplomat, died 1930) co-sponsors of the trip.

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Goettingen from Gasthaus

**Sunday, June 29 - Goettingen**

End of the day. A party attended by Davis, Schultz, & the Rothenthaler twins, turned out to be one that we all should have attended. It was at one of the dueling corporations – they were treated to dueling exhibitions and witnessed some of the colourful fraternity toasts.

**Monday, June 30 - Leaving Goettingen**

En route to Czechoslovakia. During the day we passed into Catholic Bavarian Germany – the onion-shaped dome characterizes the German Catholic churches.

Our bus driver has served O.B (the leader of the German group). in the summer for many years. In between he has driven to Morocco, Italy for similar tours.

We stopped at Fulda for dinner and stayed at Bamberg for the night. It takes a while to get used to the huge feather comforters on the beds.

**Tuesday, July 1 - Czech Border**

Early in the AM we arrived at the Czech border – continuous barbed wire fence, tank obstacles (girders, cement piers), lookout stations. Obviously more effective at keeping people in, than armies out. We noticed a difference immediately. The custom's house and its furnishings were very drab and poorly maintained. I changed money for the group to the tune of 10 crowns each (market rate: 1 USD=7.17 crowns or 14.34 crowns for tourists). The rate is 7.21/dollar, bought back.

Just past the border we met our guides – a girl student, Alena Ludova and a linguist, Henry Schick, both from Brno. Both proved in a short time to be dyed-in-the-wool dogmatists, hence well chosen for their task. But they were well versed in the history of their country and of Europe as was characteristic of many European students we met. Our bus crew was a good example. The German students

particularly knew their facts and dates of history, the arts. Our group never stopped quizzing the guides throughout the passage thru the satellite countries.



Stribro

It was a dirty and dusty drive from the German border to Prague. The roads in Czechoslovakia are several notches poorer than those in the Western European countries. Even though we were on a main artery to Prague, we averaged 30 mph in our new Mercedes bus. Cobblestone highways. The ride through the hilly countryside and small villages was wonderfully scenic but a little too slow for our anxious bus load who were in high gear anticipating their brief 40 days behind the Iron Curtain

We lunched at a poor town called Stribro (Silver), west of Pilsen. There were red stars on the town hall and loudspeakers all over the town for quick dissemination of centralized commands and information. There, we were introduced to the typical Czech fare. As became apparent, Czechs diet is very starchy – potatoes, their famous dumplings, bread, fatty soups and meats, puddings, pastries, etc. The meal consisted of soup (mit noodles), potatoes & meat plus beer or a weak, sweet drink. Among ourselves, jokes at mealtime invariably centered on the lack of greens, undrinkable coffee, immense quantities of potatoes. I might mention here that a few of the important items missing from most peoples' kits were: liquid detergent, hand soap, instant coffee, toilet paper, vitamins, and books for students (who are keenly interested in anything American/from the West, wash-and-wear everything, American coins and chewing gum.



Czech Gas Station

I spent part of the trip to Tatra (the only Czech-made auto other than the Skoda). It looks like something from Buck Rogers (with fins). Roads go over the hills, not through them as in America. Many of the roads are constructed of small cobblestones, painstakingly laid and seemingly with an infinite life. Along the sides of the highways are white stone markers every 40 ft. for safety in fogs. Roads are windy – so much so that you can cover only about 300 miles in 10 hr.

In Prague we billeted at the University Hostel – a huge student residence (several large, recently built buildings) and ate at the Mensa (cheap student prices). Noodle soup, potatoes, dumplings and veal were on the menu. At the Hostel, rooms

were fine but bathrooms dirty. No hot water. No toilet paper. The girls had some awkward moments because the dorms were designed and used by boys (engineers). They stayed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor but had 4<sup>th</sup> floor bathrooms. An early morning male, uninformed, non-group bather interrupted Sally Meikle unexpectedly in the washroom. Sally, (from what I hear) had a short nightgown. Judy Rothenthaler led the pack by locking herself out from her room 4 times.

Beer is good and a major beverage in Czechoslovakia, e.g, *Pilsen, Pilsener Beer*. That evening, we met Alena who conducted us to the Petrin Hill overlooking Prague. It's a wooded hill with an observatory, rose beds and pub (Hospoda) at the summit.

Accompanying us was a young Sudanese (Basher) and Leningrad Russian (Yanya). Basher was very outgoing and was an emphatic anti-communist. His father had been an important military figure with the Sudanese army before WWII who had defected with a regiment to support Rommel in the North Africa campaign rather than side with the British. After the war he was tried as a war criminal and sentenced to 5 yr., leaving the father still fascist by inclination. Basher, however, was led to believe that socialism was the future for his country (Sudan). He had the opportunity to study in London, Italy or Prague – and chose electrical engineering in Prague.



Czech Soldiers, Sally Eaton

Basher said that the feeling in Sudan was anti-west due to the threat of economic domination. His attitude had changed since his arrival in Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, he said Czechs met him with a mixture of fascination and prejudice (only a handful of blacks in Prague). I saw the bartender at the Pub examine Basher's hands for differences. Except for his student friends, acquaintances would not greet him. For the group, I gave him a copy of American poetry in exchange for *The Truth About Hungary* published in Moscow and a few other government publications. He had a copy of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee*. There was a note on its cover page to the effect that the book was banned in the U.S. libraries and schools because it bred social unrest. Alena explained this away by saying that it

was probably by some bureaucrat who wished to enhance his position.

He accompanied us on an evening walk up Petrin hill to see Prague at night.

Alena was not as dogmatic as many. Rick Ehrlich had her attempting the 'Buck Step'. Davis taught her how to throw a Frisbee. She laughed when Monte Shaw paraded a Russian hammer & sickle flag into the room one evening. Then she accepted a book of American poetry in exchange for a box of soap flakes & a few other necessities.

### Wednesday, July 2 - Prague

Breakfasted with the usual rolls, jam and milk before being herded into a nearby building where we were formally introduced/welcome to the city of Prague. Although O.B worked through the Peace Committee to arrange the trip, it was left with the Youth Committee (nationwide) to prepare the accommodations, etc. At the meeting we met:

- Bishop Novak – head of the Czech church
- Robert Jurak – Committee for foreign Relations of the Cultural Committee of Youth
- Mrs. Hrubá – League of Women (who subsequently presented each of the girls with a polyethylene package containing a Lenin pin, bandana, etc.)
- Dr. Martinic – teacher, Ministry of School & Culture
- Mr. Suamberg – Leader of the Committee for International Relations in the Youth Movement
- Karel Cerny – doctor of international law – now working with the foreign relations branch of the Peace Committee. He actually met the group at the border and later proved to be a good friend, e.g. he gave me his copy of the London Times (Agricultural Supplement only – and later gave me a copy of Julius Fucik's book *Report from the Gallows* (discussed later) and a few others.

The Correct name of the Peace Committee is the Czech Committee of the Partisans of Peace (Panska 7, Praha 3)

Jurak, a young man, welcomed us. Suamberg bombarded us with an hour of statistics on the Czech economy e.g. steel production, now 10 million tonnes, will equal France in 1965?) - with a few anti-capitalist digs thrown in. Martinic's talk on education was interpreted. Novak also talked briefly on the Czech church. We talked later with Novak on this same subject (O.B. had met Novak at the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lidice massacre).



Prague Old Town Hall

Wednesday afternoon we bused through the city visiting the Museum of National Literature (an old monastery dating from the 1600's featuring a beautiful frescoed ceiling and a collection of old, primarilyu theological,books) and the Prague Castle (just as old, overlooking the city from a distant hill). Within the next few days it became clear that Prague is a historic treasury.

In the evening, a few of us (the Rothenthaler twins, Meikle, Eaton) spent a few hours with Dr Novak and with O.B. We learned that of them all, his church (the Czech church) seems to be most supported by the state i.e. a million members (Czech population 13 million). Both Novak and our guide told us that although the population was predominantly Roman Catholic, only 8% were active churchgoers. I concluded that Novak was merely a parrot, had few convictions and had rationalized the conflict between the aims of communism and the Christian Church. He was a man without a cause.

#### Thursday, July 3 - Prague

More tours. The Old Town Square with its Old Town Hall (which was nearly totally demolished by the retreating Nazis in W.W. II) the Tyne Church, (which have been abbreviated from *St. Mary's church in front of the enclosure* - a Romanesque building from the 10<sup>th</sup> century). Crowds gathered outside the Old Town Hall to watch an ancient astronomical clock strike the hour - (Jesus & his disciples pop out of the clock to the tolling of the bell by the devil) and the signs of the zodiac, rotation of the sun/moon seasons are also presented.

Van Camp reports that Schick, the guide, is convinced that the Rosenbergs were executed for being Communists.

One banana costs 28 cents. Fruits/green vegetables are very scarce.

In the PM we visited Petschek Prison once a private house (Petschek's Palace) and converted to Gestapo use (to torture Czech resistance members) during the war. We saw waiting rooms where prisoners were forced to sit for days without moving, the small cells where 22 men were forced to stand wedged against one another (converted wardrobe closets), the instruments of torture, etc. We later visited a museum of Jewish Church artifacts that had been collected during the war by the Nazis for use as tourist attractions after their victory. Nearby was an ancient Jewish cemetery with stones almost face-to-face with 6 layers underneath containing an estimated 60,000 graves.

In the evening, we all attended the Czech Ballet - *La Fontaine de Bakhtchisarai*, based on a poem by Pushkin. During the intermission we met a teacher of economics who had a friend in Toronto and wanted to be remembered to him. He was friendly until I suggested that he talk with the group over our mutual interests.

Around this time we had trouble keeping the group interested in the schedule. To O.B.'s dismay, they much preferred individual sorties into the Prague streets to talk to everyone and anyone. We had a

meeting on this point and agreed that there were obligations to the trip and to our hosts. However, the individual contacts still proved to be most fruitful.

Sally Eaton (everyone's sister) and Burt Butler reduced one woman shopkeeper to tears (she hugged Sally and gave her candy) after they inquired whether the shop was state or privately owned – only a few percent remain in private hands, and these to those over 55. Then they drew her out about her memories, current dissatisfactions. Dave Davis met what seemed to be most of the students in Prague and got the impression of dissatisfaction from most of them.

Gene Camerik and Dave Tapley met Milan Klouda, a student, and his friend Frank--, a teacher who openly condemned the lack of freedom and individual enterprise. These two subsequently went with several of the group to the *Alpha*, a night club off Wenceslas (patron saint of Bohemia) Square, in the center of downtown Prague, where they treated the girls to wine, meats, confections, flowers - -?

Burt Butler is the master at communicating with people whose language he can't speak. I remember him passing me in the hall in Brno with a Polish girl - both laughing. He glanced over as he passed commenting, "she doesn't understand a word I'm saying".

### Friday, July 4 - Prague

That morning, Judy R. broke the restraints of the group, got up at 6 AM to sightsee. She talked to two men who confided their dislike of the current political system and promised to meet her later in the day in Wenceslas Square to continue discussion. They did not show.



Karlstein Castle

We visited Karlstein Castle outside of Prague. It's a huge gothic construction, built in 1347 by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV – to gain seclusion from his mistresses. Aside from losing Pidge Benin a few times, nothing eventful happened.

In the early evening, we all attended an Independence Day (U.S.) party given by the U.S. Embassy. Rip Van Camp received the invitation when he and Dan Wilder reported in. We all attended and had an amazing experience – meeting the many ambassadors, military attachés, etc. We drank all the orange juice we could get our hands on.

Later Friday evening, we all became culture conscious again, attending the Czech symphony's performance of Dvorak's *New World* and Schubert's *Unfinished* symphonies.



Prague - the Moldau

### Saturday, July 5 - Prague

In the morning, the girls looked for good buys in Czech cut glass and were generally disappointed. Julie Foster did best with a \$2 ash tray/sugar bowl or something.

On the street, Prague citizens seem to be very curious about the group – stop to stare, many say hello or smile. The modern bus we traveled on is always a scene-stealer. Many times we felt the need for a guitar, harmonica.

In the afternoon, we visited Lidice, the small town



that was obliterated by the Nazis in retaliation for the assassination of the Nazi General of Police, Reinhard Heydrich. All houses were leveled. 340 villagers were shot/killed ( of which 88 children). Nazi reprisals (which they openly publicized) totaled 1300 throughout Czechoslovakia, including the many sent to concentration camps. A new town was built a mile from the old site. Nearby, on a hill, grow 30,000 roses from funds raised by British miners and others.

Today, however, Lidice appears to be more than a memorial. It has been politicized by the state and enlisted as a propaganda tool. Busloads daily make the pilgrimage to remind old and young of the fascist atrocities. One monument, for instance, has plaques representing cities that suffered similar fates to that of Lidice – Hiroshima and Dresden were among them

In the evening, Wilder, the twins, and me had dinner at the new Yalta hotel to rebalance our diet. We partially succeeded by investing \$4 each in a meal, but got most satisfaction from the stolen toilet paper.

### Sunday, July 6 - to Brno

We left for Brno today. A personnel problem arose. O.B. exerted his strong will and refused to budge from Prague if the Peace Committee did not remove Jaborik as guide. He felt that J's continual dogmatism and crude personality were demoralizing the group. J. was replaced.



Guides: Dr. Drozd & Alena

Dr. Czerny presented the group with a short biography of Comenius, a famous Czech educator of the 17<sup>th</sup> century who championed universal education – funding by the state for the benefit of all. I wonder if the good Dr. was aware of Comenius' motto "All things should proceed and develop of their own free will, with complete absence of violence". Rather ironic coming from a Communist. By the way, the Czechs we've met tend to avoid the term 'communism', preferring 'socialism'.

At this point, Dr. Drozd, a teacher of German in the Agricultural dept. of the government, joined the group for the trip to Brno. He is a fine fellow who

O.B. met during last year's exchange trip. He told me that about 73% of the farmland was collectivized – eventually 90%. He said Moravia and Bohemia were now no more industrialized than Slovakia. He wanted to avoid political discussions, but was very enthusiastic about the agriculture program. No surplus problems because the state determines production (yeah). A farmer can privately farm what he needs for subsistence.



Zetor Tractor Factory

Punishments for traffic violations are severe: 1<sup>st</sup> violation - 50 kr.; 2<sup>nd</sup> - 100 kr.; 3<sup>rd</sup> 200 – kr.; 4<sup>th</sup> – licence suspended for good. Alcoholism is a problem here and posters warning against its evils are common. The state attempts to counteract this by raising alcohol prices to exorbitant levels. The best car in Czechoslovakia (the Tatra 603, according to B. Butler) costs 200,000 kr., or \$30,000.

Arriving in Brno, we found it a pleasant city, clean and with an apparent relatively high standard of living. Our lodgings in the student hostel were much better than Prague. No smell in the bathrooms.

**Monday, July 7 - Brno**

A trip to Zetor tractor factory. 10,000 workers, 3 shifts, turn out 100 tractors a day – a modern structure but high labour component compared to U.S industrial practices. Men work 46 hr./wk (5 days + 6 hr. on Saturday). They receive 2-4 weeks vacation. In Czechoslovakia, 1/3 of the labour force is women. 80% of output went to export, primarily to other satellite countries (Hungary, Finland, Poland, etc.). 1/3 of the work force is under 26 years of age and 80% of these are members of the Czechoslovakian Youth Organization that has work/recreational/cultural functions.

At the end of our tour, we were greeted (applause as we entered !!) by 75 local youth from this organization. They presented us with flowers, sat us down to tables laden with sandwiches, soda and cigarettes. We exchanged long speeches. It looked like another peace conference in the making. Actually, we asked each other questions and ended by having a personal discussion with our host and exchanging addresses. They were genuinely happy to meet us.

My talk with our lawyer guide typified what was said and felt that day and in all our days in Czechoslovakia, for that matter. He said: Hungary was a big mistake; Czechoslovakia was more western than others (satellites); was more like the Yanks and British; that they were Social Democrats and resented and hated the individual repression of the current government. He hoped some day things would improve, but said it must evolve and could not be forced against the current regime.



Czech Funeral

We gave them one of Rip's records. They gave us pictures taken of us in the plant which had been developed on the spot. We are wondering to what use they will be put. I received a small cheap badge from one of the youths. It had the head of Julius Fuchik stamped on it. Fuchik, a 30-year-old Czech communist, was a resistance fighter/publisher who was tortured by the Nazis, then hanged in Petschek prison. He was literary figure, journalist and thinker and has become a revered communist cultural figure. The badge is given to he who had read certain works of Marx, Lenin, Gottwald and Dreiser (American writer,

socialist, activist [*Sister Carrie, An American Tragedy*]), etc. denoting the achievement of a certain cultural level.

About O.B. Talking to him in the bus revealed that he has worked actively in the last 10 years to obtain a million dollars from the Ford Foundations. He knows John McCloy (World Bank president) and I. F. Stone (activist, leftist journalist). He sought the funds to build Nansen Houses in Munich, Heidelberg, Berlin and Bonn, He has been refused each time on the grounds that the West German government should provide the money. O.B. says the grants should be free of German control.

We are getting along fine with O.B. Once in a while he does become exasperated by the slowness of shepherding 43 trip members (lesson: never take a group that size for any purpose). Unavoidably, his experiences in the WWII concentration camps and the death of his 3-year-old son after the war have affected his manner.



Folksong Festival near Brno

Monday afternoon we saw the stalactites & stalagmites of the *Macocha Grotto* (a cave system, part of the 500' deep sinkhole north of Brno). We lost Pidge before this trip.

There are 3 harmonicas on board. It seems the repertory is limited to *You Are My Sunshine*.

**Tuesday, July 8 - Depart Brno**

Leave for Trencin. Stopped for a tour of Stravinice's monastery castle. Here Pidge lost her camera, the first misfortune since Bert's passport incident. Day-long journeys, such as this one, force everyone to get to know everyone else. Strangely enough, there is no tedium in this group of 43. Apparently there is a broad knowledge base to provide the fuel for conversation. For example, Manfred Kahlweit, a physicist from the U. of Goettingen, is one of the more knowledgeable in the group. He has an interesting, sarcastic/ironic opinion of the "German character", which topic has been well tossed about on this journey. Gunther Schutze of the same age as Kahlweit (30, approx.), works with a rather indefinable branch of the German Foreign Office in Paris. Speaks and acts like a Frenchman. He is our expert on architectural styles, Gothic through Classical.



Brno Nursery

Trencin was a disappointment. It was a one-factory town (a red star on it). We were housed in a large development for industrial workers – specifically in the trade school section. There seemed to be a raggedy child for every brick in the building. A Russian officer chewed out Alena, the guide for distributing candy to the mobbing children. His reason: pictures might be taken and used as propaganda, i.e. pictures of the 'starving' Czechs. This wasn't the only encounter with the paranoid Russian/Czech temperament. The next morning, the janitor approached our guide and demanded that we give up a sketch that he had seen one of our group drawing. It turned out to be a rough sketch by Fritz Weidle (an architect) of the distant Russian factory including tenements. After some to-and fro-ing between the two sides, the sketch was finally destroyed.

The accommodations were the poorest yet. Physically they were quite livable but O.B. felt that they were disgraceful from a diplomatic point of view.

That evening, Dr. Drozd took us to a nearby health spa (mineral waters) and the group danced till late in the evening. Fritz and Betsy Weidle stole the show (and the applause of holidaying Czechs) with their jazz dancing.

Drozd deserves the respect that O.B. gives him. He is a straight forward person (with a deformed, short, leg which causes a decided limp) who believes in the benefits that socialism can bring to his country but who refuses to talk about the aspects of the political system which encroach on individual freedom. His take on capitalism stems from the inequities between the social levels he experienced at school.

### Wednesday, July 9 - to Ostrava



Peace Camp near Ostrava

We took a side trip to visit a voluntary student work group. They were recruited from the area to serve for several weeks (board provided) on the local agricultural project. In this case, they were digging ditches to drain land. They explained to us that their value was in the money that they saved the state. Their lodgings were old Nazi buildings originally constructed for much the same purpose. The young folk were poorly dressed but apparently well fed. We had little opportunity to exchange much information because we restricted our activities to volleyball games.

I neglected to mention that the day before we visited a trade school for future employees of the rubber industry named after the national hero Emil

Zatopek ("the Czech Locomotive"), the long distance runner who won three medals at the 1952 Olympics. The school takes in youths from 14 to 18 years of age for a 3-year course in the 4 major subdivisions of work in the typical rubber (tire) factory. A graduate is committed to work 5 years in a location designated by the state unless he can arrange a "trade" with one of his peers. Life in the school was quite regimented, from recreation to studies. These foregoing examples, along with our general experience with the Youth Committees in Czechoslovakia, made it obvious that the state stressed control of youth.

Some prices: A cheap plastic purse – 90 kr. (remember that the average weekly wage is about 350 kr.). Typewriter – 1690 kr. Medium-quality shoes – 300 Kr. State controls of prices results in uniform countrywide prices.

### Thursday, July 10 - Ostrava

Ostrava is a dirty town – but good accommodations and a variety in food. We met:

- Shawnik Aloss – secretary of local youth organization
- Jabinsky Ladislav – youth committee for Mining School. I didn't speak many words to him during the stay but he was very kind. Refused payment for a haircut which he took me to get & subsequently paid for. U.S. cigarettes come in handy for situations like this.
- Eva Nimura – sport committee
- Sylva Mikulikova – secretary of some committee or other



Collective Farm

The highlight of the day was a visit to a local collective farm. This is to be distinguished from the state farm which is set up to produce crops in short supply, like sugar beet. Apparently, the collective tends to be more successful. The state farms are also used for uncultivated lands, accounting for 10% of the cropland but yielding proportionally more of certain produce, e.g. 30% of the pork. Collective and state farms account for 70% of all production.

Later that evening we had a group discussion with Czechs concerning the 'lack of freedom'. To force collectivization,

the individual farmers lot is made difficult by constraint by the state on his supplies, equipment – all in the interest of state efficiency. *Kulaks*, condemned by the state, are defined a "those who formerly exploited the people and particularly one so judged by his neighbours". Kulak is a Stalinist term applied to above-average households e.g. if you had a tin roof. As a class Stalin eliminated millions through execution or gulagization.

The collective farm of optimum size had 200 members, 2500 hectares and specialized in dairy products and sugar beet (regulated by the state). In the case of this farm, there were about 500 villagers, the balance being women, children, and factory workers. As far as quality goes, we were told that it was somewhat above average. Monte Shaw, the nearest thing we had to an expert, said that overall, they fell much short of an average New York dairy farm. The stables were dirty, though production was quite high – automatic removal of cow shit, semi-automatic milking devices. Each cow was graphed for milk production, pregnancy data. Artificial insemination is locally organized.

Workers on the farms were paid in work “units”, fixed by a farm committee, and then paid a fixed rate for each unit performed per day e.g. 36 kr/unit. The more skilled the job, the higher the unit value.



Tractor drivers were among the best paid – 8 categories of jobs in all.

Authority in the village in the village was divided. Collective farm supervision was by a foreman (party member) who had no political position but was nominated & elected (in the one-candidate fashion) by farm members. His job was to ensure that state quotas were fulfilled. On the other hand, there was the ‘mayor’ of the village, a rather wizened old man, who was responsible to the national committee and theoretically ranked higher than the foreman. He interprets the constitution.

On the farm there is an agronomist, veterinarian. Members do little in the wintertime – pay is deferred to tide them through the winter.

Breakdown of expenses looks something like this (million kr):

Crops, equip't, etc.	1.5
Wages	1.8
Repairs	0.3
Cultural Fund	0.11
Accident, Social	0.04
Health	0.08
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 3.83

Any excess is distributed back to the members.

The highlight of the visit was meeting one of the tractor drivers who had lived in Canada (Alberta) for 17 years, returned in 1946 to stay with his parents. He had 2 brothers in Canada and 3<sup>rd</sup> in a Czech jail (indefinite sentence, no trial) for trying to escape the country. He was the epitome of resigned futility, knowing that any request to leave the country would not be granted. He made it clear that he had made a mistake in returning. Life was not easy for him. He did not open up much, particularly when there were more than a few people in the vicinity.

That evening we had a heated debate with about 20 of the local youth committee. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss our impressions of Czechoslovakia. It turned into a battle of ideologies. From our group came pointed questions concerning the lack of freedom in the country e.g. barbed wire on the frontiers, no freedom of the press or travel. It became evident early that we were getting the rote intelligence of 13 years of exposure to dogma. They refused to be objective, laughing outright at some of our statements. Discussion was painful, requiring translation from Czech to German/English & back. For 3-1/2 hr. they refused to budge from party dicta. Afterwards, however, some measure of diplomacy was maintained when we spent an hour with them at the local pub. The evening ended on a pleasant note when we chugged slivovice (a clear liquor from plums or cherries) with them.

**Friday, July 11 - Poland**

Into Poland. A different, different country. With the Gomulka coup of October, 1956, following the Posnan riots, some reforms were undertaken in defiance of Khrushchev. The political thaw lasted for a few years.

Is it my imagination – Polish people are slimmer? Less potato, dumplings in the diet? People are not reluctant to speak to you. At our first stop, Katowice, Gerry Abraham and Stu Rome were treated to 2 pints each by a young fellow who could speak no English but who would not accept payment. Everyone seems curious about us. In a way, our guide exemplified the more relaxed freedom. He is a member of one of the top jazz ensemble that toured Copenhagen recently. What we find are more western styles in music, clothing. Pre-1956, peg pants were banned in Poland because they characterized the decadent west.

On the other hand, Poles seem to be less communicative than the Czechs. Perhaps because there is less to complain about. Encountered many drunks on the streets. Abraham relates an incident in a tavern in which a drunk (a local magistrate judge) shouted condemnation of Khrushchev, Gomulka. Ben Shertok & I met a drunk on the street-car who literally raised his hands to the heavens when he learned that we were Americans/Canadians.

A political thought: It appears to me that Western support for Polish industry is vitally needed if the country is to remain out of the complete control of the USSR. The culture is largely westernized.

**Saturday, July 12 - Auschwitz**

Auschwitz

Unbelievably morbid. 4-1/2 million people (mostly Jews) methodically killed here. The camp is 70 acres, 50 buildings with a capacity of 40,000 deaths per day. Atrocities are preserved in the exhibits of human-hair rugs, reproductions of gas chambers, crematoriums, barracks. There are rooms full of artificial limbs, spectacles, human hair, etc. An effective way of keeping alive the hatred of the Nazis (the West Germans?)

**Sunday, July 13 - Cracow**

The city seemed untouched by war (unlike Warsaw). Visited the Wawel castle (900 AD) overlooking the city and the Vistula R. A DaVinci painting. This huge castle is the most impressive artistic monument we have yet seen. We used protective slippers to prevent marking castle floors. Diverse architectural types are evident – Baroque, Renaissance, brick Gothic, etc.

Black market zlotys 100 for \$1 (official rate, 23.5) Average monthly wage 1000 zlotys. Saw one of two remaining Polish barbicans (semi-circular outpost fortress).

**Monday, July 14 - Cracow**

In the last decade or so, Nova Huta has been converted into an industrial suburb of Cracow for propaganda purposes. We visited the Nova Huta steel complex. However, being as isolated as Cracow is from the main population areas of Poland, the economics of the steel company make little sense. Also on our agenda, the salt mines (dating from 1689) where we descended 135 metres to see the religious statues carved in salt – why?

We had to clear up a little friction with O.B. While relations have been generally OK, we encountered some opposition from him when we said we had to decline the Polish offer to extend our stay by 7

days due to the expiry date on the Russian visa. O.B maintained that we had obligations to his (German) group and should not offend the Poles by leaving. We finally compromised agreeing to an extra 3 days. He is strong-willed and wants his own way. Otherwise we got along well with the German, Dutch students.

### Tuesday, July 15 - Cracow

Recreation day – for swimming, basketball. Polish swimming pools are not like those in the US. The one we went to had 3 large pools, outdoors with, it seemed, 2000 people with enough bathing suit material for 1000 suits. The Poles are expert at water polo, volleyball.

For the first time, I encountered group issues. After the relative oppressive/controlling atmosphere in Czechoslovakia, the group started to feel cramped in Poland. It was difficult maintaining cohesion. Some wanted more freedom to do as they pleased, others wanted more opportunity for group discussion. O.B. added fuel to the complaints because of his apparent disdain for the ability/maturity of the Americans.



Kielce - US Ambassador

### Wednesday, July 16 - depart Cracow

On the way to Warsaw – we stopped at a small, poor, town (Kielce). We were surprised to encounter a grand Cadillac (tail fins and all) parked in the center of town besieged by curious spectators (see photo). Also surprising, an exhibit of American architecture in the town museum with a good representation of contemporary design.

We crawled to Warsaw at 25 mph, ave. due to the narrow, twisting roads. Warsaw is a place rebuilt. But still apparent were the ruins that still remained and the bullet holes in building walls. In WWII, by

Hitler's order, the city was leveled (85%) in retaliation for the Jewish uprising in 1944 described in John Hersey's book *The Wall*.

On arrival, in the evening, after billeting at the Polish Students' Hostel, we took a wild trolley bus down New World St. to the US embassy. If you're half on you're considered a passenger.



Lazienki Royal Park

Warsaw is on its way to being rebuilt now, with extensive construction still under way. This results in a very dusty city. An eager statistician estimated that the annual average consumption of dust by a Warsawian is 1-1/2 bricks.

At the embassy, we "checked" into the city. We expected to learn much of the Lebanese dispute but no one was informed. At the time, Eisenhower was dispatching troops to prop up the pro-western regime against internal Muslim/Christian rebellion and related threats from Syria and Egypt.

### Wednesday to Sunday, July 17 to 20 - Warsaw

There is a gap in recording for this period due to the pressure of events. The highlights of the 3 days were:

- The ruins of the Warsaw ghetto
- Palace of Culture with its wedding-cake architecture

- A performance at the Chopin residence/museum
- Performance of Polish folk dancers
- Lazienki Royal Park with Chopin monument
- A wonderful theatre performance by the Mazowsze folk song and dance ensemble



Folk Dancers

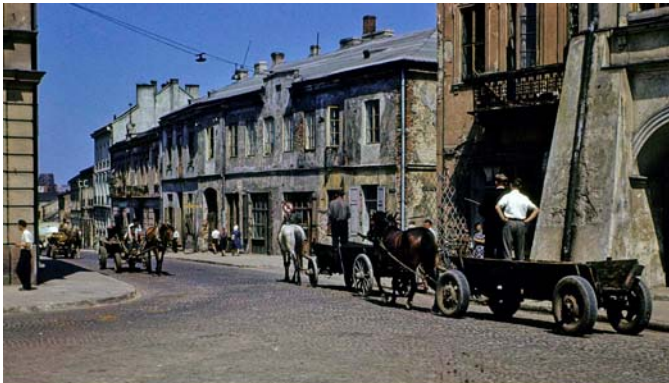
In any group with varied backgrounds, ages, interests, languages, there is the potential for some social dissonance. Ours was no exception.

Our relations with the O.B., the leader of the German/Dutch contingent steadily cooled over the course of the trip, particularly between him and me. A brief recap of his background: He was a man with a cause. After the war, he was disillusioned with his church and was offered the chance to play a part in the reeducation of German youth. His close-up experience with the Nazi regime had provided him with his cause. Rumour had it that his relocation to Germany resulted in

the divorce from his first wife. He had a vision of many Fridtjof Nansen Haus' across Germany (there are several today in 2012). He was frustrated by the slow realization of these goals.

The sources of the static between him and the American group (especially me, as leader) were:

- He has conceptions of the American student as being naïve, immature, undisciplined. Although greatly exaggerated, given their relative youth, there is a modicum of truth in this. O.B wanted a more serious, study group.
- He has no give or take, no desire to mix with the students or to understand others. That is why he is not at all warmly held by those at the Fridtjof Nansen Haus in Goettingen.
- There was poor turnout by the Germans on some of the events, thus not honouring their obligations to our Polish hosts.



En route to Cracow

Given all this, however, it must be stressed that there was nothing but the best relations between the two groups and among our guides, hosts, etc.

There was one more final complication when O.B. wanted us to accompany them to Danzig for an additional 10 days. We refused due to the added expense and the fact that our Russian entry permit would have been jeopardized.

At that point, the two groups split. We finished our Polish stay with an evening at the Mannequin Club where Manfred, Davis and Ehrlich combined their guitar-playing talents and created a final ode – the *Warsaw Blues*

### Monday, July 21 – Warsaw

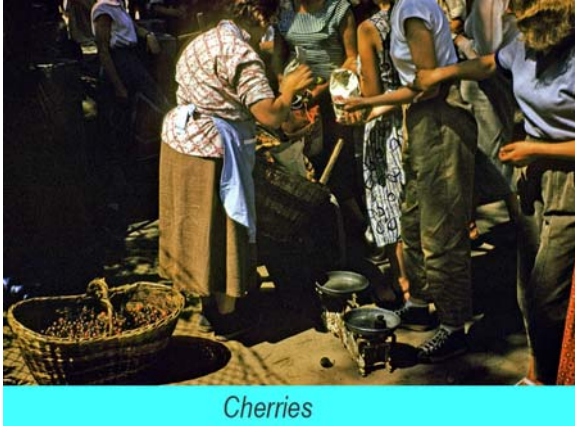
The German group left early this morning for Danzig. Because they were unable to obtain visas for DDR, They planned to return through Czechoslovakia.

This was a free day. with an assigned guide from the Polish Students' Tourist Association ('Milec'), Wilder & I made preparations for the Russian leg. That morning we went to the correspondent bank with our letter of credit



to exchange enough dollars to rubles for the train trip. (25\$ @ 15:\$1. The tourist rate in Russia will be 10:1. It is illegal to bring rubles into Russia). In addition, we exchanged enough to pay for the train fare - \$775 for 20; 1<sup>st</sup> class from Warsaw to Brest; 2<sup>nd</sup> class from Brest to Moscow. We then went to Orbis, the Polish state agency, to purchase tickets. We probably should have purchased black market zlotys (100:1) instead of the official 23.5:1! We generally discouraged trip members from these illegal transactions..

We shopped for 33-1/3 records: the Chopin Polonaises at a special *Chopin* store; *Mazowsze* folk dances; a much-needed guitar for Dave Davis for \$5.



Cherries

About this time a dysentery epidemic hit the camp. Some suspect worms in the cherries we had bought on the street (9 zl for one kilo), or the water. Whatever the cause, the effects were real – carbon pills, Alka Seltzer became the standard chasers. As for chasing, vodka is the most popular liquor – although quite expensive in line with the government policy to cut down on alcoholism. The custom is to drink a fifth, with or without a chaser. We indulged in some moderate, tentative experimentation

### Tuesday, July 22 - depart Warsaw

At 10AM sharp, we were bused to the station. Today, Warsaw is decked in red & white bunting to commemorate the liberation of Poland by Russia in 1944. A long parade, held this year in Lodz, changes city each year. We're carrying with us a dozen *Information Please* almanacs and two-dozen books on US geography, society, etc. that Van Camp obtained free from the US embassy. These we plan to distribute later. He was also successful in obtaining a carton of US cigarettes.

Because exchange of zlotys to dollars is difficult (can be done through letters of credit, party banks), many of the group invested their remaining groszys in cherries (risky), buns, etc. Sally Meikle had already charmed her way into possession of some *Skippy* peanut butter (from an embassy marine, I'm told) and *Cheez Whiz*. This tided us over.

By train, 26 hr, from Warsaw to Moscow. 1<sup>st</sup> class coach was good, though no water. The 2<sup>nd</sup> class sleeper was covered with smoke soot.

Now a little anecdote about the ingoing trip. Burt Butler and Rick Ehrlich had rubles with them that they had purchased in New York (Perera money exchange), which they were bringing (smuggling?) into the USSR – which is illegal. During the Tuesday supper in another car on the train, both had all their rubles removed from their luggage. Neither other money they had with them, nor any other contents of their baggage was touched. This surveillance shook us up a bit. We speculated that the authorities were aware of the ruble cache as a result of:

- Information from Perera
- Overhearing talk
- The process of deduction because they were the only ones who didn't buy rubles in Brest

During the train trip, we got another taste of Communist dogmatism. We talked with a young guide, who spoke Russian, French & German, about diverse subjects. He: thought the US were bandits in Lebanon; defended Russia's action in Hungary; maintained that the citizens had freedom in Russia, Czechoslovakia & Poland. He liked us OK when we gave him chewing gum. From that time on we were continually pestered by young folks for gum, automatic pencils and ballpoint pens – usually in exchange for Russian medals.

**Wednesday, July 23 - Moscow**

Arriving in Moscow at 2:30, PM (gaining an hour from Poland) we were met at the station by two women *Intourist* guides, Marianne and Lila. They shepherded us to the Savoy Hotel, our passports collected by the local gendarmes and shown to well-appointed rooms – noticeable improvement over experiences to date. Some had suites, all had hot water, soap in the washbasin. Furniture was of another era, i.e. before the revolution (?). *Intourist* whisked us through a better-than-par dinner and into a 2-hour city bus tour – Red Square, Moscow U., Lenin's tomb, St. Basil's, etc.

I went over the itinerary and got the impression of quiet efficiency. We also figured out that we didn't get the premier guides because of our *Tourist B* status. The difference between Deluxe and Tourist B is one of degree – taxis instead of buses, choice on the menu, better accommodations – but in actuality, small differences.

During our short tour, we observed that Moscow is indeed an excellent showcase. City streets are wide, people are relatively smartly dressed - -. Near the university (built in 1949-'53, accommodating 24000 students) there was an apartment building development of over 300 buildings each housing 200 people. Some stats (rubles):

- Skilled workers earn 1500-2000 r/mth
- Unskilled, 800
- Professors, 5000-6000
- Graduate engineer, 1000 r/mth, 2000 after 5 yr. He/she must spend 2 yr. at the profession before receiving a diploma
- Small car (Muscovite), 15000
- Large car, 20000



Agricultural & Industrial Exhibition

a lot like a '53 Packard plus tail fins (it was not yet off the drawing board). It was immediately apparent that the fair was a symbol for the citizenry – an impressive one, actually.



Industrial Exhibition

**Thursday, July 24 - Moscow**

Meals here are the best so far on the trip – no complaints possible.

From 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM spent at the grandiose agricultural and industrial exhibition in the environs of Moscow. The Ag section is particularly imposing with one huge building built for each of the 15 republics in its own characteristic architectural style. Everywhere you turn there is a monument or a fountain. Many items in the industrial display had a US flavour. For example a *Yank* auto that looked

That evening, several of us visited the *American Club* and, therefore, the American colony. Very disappointing. Because the personnel are not allowed to fraternize with the Russians, they are restricted to places such as this (the only one of its kind in Moscow). Also present were strays from many other embassies (Canadian, Finnish, French, etc.) and many students from a group of 128 led by a professor – all from California. As we learned, they were traveling 1<sup>st</sup> class (Helsinki, Leningrad) and isolated from contact on their own.

We saw the vestiges of the recent Lebanon demonstration – broken windows, ink-spattered walls. Embassy witnesses said that there were initially only 2000 demonstrators but it soon became more organized and the crowd swelled to 100,000.

On the way back, I met a Russian English teacher. George, outside the Grand Hotel (one of the few allotted to foreigners). 50 or so students had gathered around a nucleus of several US students. Burt Butler took his crack at asking questions in Russian. Four hours later, after a candid discussion of the East/West situation, we had constructed and agreed to a peaceful solution. No problem.

### Friday, July 25 - Moscow

To the Archangel Palace. Too many palaces, too many statues. Reasonably successful, but interest by the group in such things is on the wane.



Sidewalks

In the afternoon, to the GUM department store. Pidge bought a Russian camera, disassembled it, had a few parts left over, then left it for a repairman to put it back together - at the cost of a ballpoint pen. Wilder and Van Camp continued acquiring Russian medals in exchange for Wrigley's gum.

Later in the PM we saw Russian *Cinerama* (a Russian travelogue) in a huge new building that seated a few thousand. It was technically inferior to the US product both in colour and synchronization, but content was interesting.

The Rothenthalers, Meikle explored urban areas off the beaten track, discovering cramped living conditions. Prefab apartments are being constructed wholesale. As a result, a feature of the Moscow skyline is the profile of hundreds of inverted-ell cranes [JT note: something not common in America at the time].

On the diplomatic front, Wilder remains the best mime communicator. However, we find that a liberal sprinkling of *spasiba's* and *puzhalsta's* is even more effective than doling out chewing gum. On the way back from Cinerama, we met 2 quite westernized Russian boys who were eager to talk – they were interested in jazz – Gerry Mulligan. Things were getting better, they said, and didn't want any war to take it away.



Lenin Tomb lineup

### Saturday, July 26 - Moscow

We visited the Kremlin – Archangel, Assumption and Enunciation Cathedrals. The latter has two doors – a separate one for Ivan the Terrible who had incurred the wrath of the church by marrying wives #'s 5,6 &7 after the church said "no". Ivan also has his own bell tower.

Gene Camerik forgot his camera that day but plans to take photos of *Tasti-Freez* booths back home and substitute them for the Russian mosque-like domes that he missed recording.

In Red Square, we lined up with the thousands

to file slowly past the coffins of Lenin and Stalin. The Square is cleared before the scheduled opening time. The crowd was not happy when our group was given priority to squeeze in early. Marianna, our guide, had to do a lot of hollering. Several wreaths were placed at the mausoleum – there seemed to be an feeling of worshipful reverence. However, the ever-present bust of Lenin suggests that the aura of the man is here to stay [JT note: at least until 1989]. It was almost anti-climatic seeing the preserved remains. Joe looked as vital as he had 5 years ago, Vladimir, a little waxy. Near the tomb, at his own request, John Reed, the author of *10 Days That Shook the World*, is buried in a common grave.

That afternoon, most of us took a return boat excursion down the Moskva River from the Kremlin to Moscow University and back. There are about a dozen of these launch-like ships that travel 9 minutes apart to various shore stations – primarily for recreation purposes. From the ship we viewed the endless construction activity in the city.



Moskva Launch

The weather was hot for most of our stay. Perhaps in a need to avoid cramped living conditions, the downtown streets (20' wide sidewalks) are packed, the fairs are packed, the stadiums are packed. Muscovites spend much of their time in queues – for ice cream, at GUM, changing of the guard at Red Square, for trains. They seem to enjoy it, but maybe are just resigned..

That evening, after the Savoy Special (a nondescript soup with everything in it from big chunks of meat to a variety of vegetables, plus delicious yogurt ice cream) we were treated to a puppet show. Although language was a barrier, the performance was exceptional. Marianna, whose

friend was the daughter of a puppeteer, told us that it was a well-developed, professional, art form.

As a result of the influx of tourists to Moscow (3000/yr. and doubling annually) there has been a class of youths created known as “Russian Americans”) – a derogatory term. They adopt American dress, mannerisms and with some knowledge of the English language pose as Americans – to gain access to clubs, cafés not otherwise open to them. We met several of this type like the two we met the previous night who were primarily interested in obtaining jazz records. The penalty for trading on the black market for a citizen is 15 years; for a tourist, ejection from the country, barred from returning.

### Sunday, July 27 - Moscow

Visited the extravagant metro system in the AM and Gorky Park in the PM. The park is a 300-acre recreational facility on the Moskva R. Gorky has become a Soviet icon acknowledging his peasant origins, even though, as a Bolshevik and favoured by Stalin, he was in and out of favour with the regime. He died or was killed in 1936.



Gorky Park

I went to the park on Navy Day with a Russian and witnessed the Muscovites at play. Their “fair” is much like one in the US – with Ferris wheels, shooting galleries, mallet devices for strength testing, band concerts, etc. But there is more. A separate pavilion for playing chess, dominoes, checkers. At the time of our visit there was an expert playing 17 challengers. There was also a large exhibition of posters designed by John Heartfield (an East German, highly politicized, photomontage

artist, actual name - Helmut Herzfeld, died in 1968). The pictures were very macabre and grotesque. His work is replete with bayonets, skeletons, and corpses characterizing Goebbels, Hitler, Hess, et al, as monsters. Originally used as anti-National Socialist statements, they continue to serve a similar political purpose for the Soviets. He was influenced by Brecht and Grosz.

Another pavilion displayed works representing the school of Socialist Realism in Russian art. No abstraction to be seen. For the most part there were scenes of peasant and city life, still life, portraits and little else. In yet another exhibition, there was a display of the entries for the design of a monument for a "peace park". On the whole, they were mediocre - each with red stars in it somewhere and/or the inevitable soldier holding gun, worker holding wrench, farmer holding sickle.



Art: Socialist Realism

We passed a parked car with a crowd around it listening to a tape recording (records are expensive) of *Ricochet* by Teresa Brewer. They like western music.

Many of us went to the first day of the US/Russian athletic games in Lenin Stadium. The US ended the first day ahead by 8 points - close because some of the US men had missed the trip. The Iowa girls, Julie and Sally, met one Iowa member of the team in Red Square the day before - who they knew - as did Schultz who talked with Hall, the hammer thrower from Cornell (who came 2<sup>nd</sup> the next day, I think). The audience was not overly

partisan. Glenn Davis (Olympic gold medal hurdler/sprinter) and others received big ovations in their events.

Most of our group are actively getting out and meeting Russians. Sally Eaton, Davis & Butler have stories to tell. Dinnertime is always welcome for two reasons - food and talk. The hotel is near the Foreign Language Publishing House where English translations of Russian books are available. All Lenin's writings are available; works extolling the successes of the economy (!). Popular Russian authors include: Gorky (*Mother, My Universities*), Tolstoy (*Ordeal, The Cossacks*), Sholokov (*Quiet Flows the Don, Virgin Soil Upturned*), Ilf Petrov (*Little Golden Calf*). The Western/American titles that I saw included works by GBS, Conan Doyle, Lewis Carroll, etc.



Red Square

Closely related to literature is the subject of propaganda. It comes in many forms in

Russia: the ubiquitous statue, esp. Lenin; slanted newspapers e.g. *New Time* which described Neil McElroy (Secretary of Defense, president of P&G) as one who puts soap operas ahead of education; anti-fascist, anti-religion displays; parades; honorific medals.

On this same topic, by chance, we came across a Russian textbook for teaching children the English language. In it were many short discourses on various themes, e.g. *Clubs, Clubbers and Clubbed* by

Lincoln Steffens; Discrimination against 3 black children attending school for the first time; Unemployment in Capitalist Societies; a description of Karl Marx' study room.

### Monday, July 28 - Moscow

In the AM we trooped off to Moscow U. 24,000 students, 4000 correspondence, 4000 foreigners, night courses. It is the largest in the USSR. Central building is a huge, gothic wedding cake. Buildings, facilities are impressive, modern



Moscow University

After 10 yr. of schooling, a student is typically 17 years old and with a 3,4 or 5 standing will gain entry. With 2 yr. work experience, he/she does not have to compete for a place – he automatically qualifies with a 3,4 or 5 average. During the 5 yr. at university, a 3,4 or 5 merits a scholarship. Some athletics are required. Burt Butler reports that good athletes are enticed to the University much the same as in the US.

Many women students. Many as doctors. Probably 50% of the engineers (much higher than in the West). The use of women in achieving the state's 5-year plan is very evident. Women as professionals, surveyors, street sweepers, tram drivers, police, labourers. The childcare services that the state provides is designed to allow the married women to participate in the work force.

In the PM, to the Russian art museum – the Tretyakov Galleries, whose works cover the most complete history of Russian fine arts extant. Our guide stressed those artists whose paintings touched on the social evils of the day and got more excited as the displays evolved into Socialist Realism. The Impressionists and Constructivists of the '20's were interesting.



Fraternizing with the Locals

The final afternoon of the athletic games saw the US lose 172-170, although Rafer Johnson set a new record in the decathlon. We found out later that Harry Barnes Jr. [JT note: son-in-law of friend of Lee Klaer, and future ambassador] who is with the US embassy in Moscow, handled just such cultural exchange events.

Karl Kesler spends a lot of time searching for facts that provide good mortar for conversation. Sally Meikle nearly had her film confiscated for taking photos at the end of the subway. She was followed by a little boy who outed her to some official. Julie Foster had a similar experience when she almost spent the duration in the brig for taking photos of

old people lining up outside a store. After regaining her freedom, she returned and determined the name of the establishment. It turned out to be a clinic that was providing aid to senior citizens. Rip and Dan have had encounters with youths interested in buying American clothes, records, etc. Aided by his language advantage, Burt has had some success in bartering with the Russians – a collection of back issues of *Moscow News*, anti-west posters. Dave Davis and Rick tried to change their plans by leaving Russia via Odessa to Turkey without success due to visa constraints and *Intourist* red tape.

Service at our hotel, the Savoy, is a little problematic. It takes over an hour to complete a meal. Sour cream in the soup, on cheese, desert, yogurt, etc. Soda water is served at every meal – a nice habit. Have to quit mistaking the caviar for black currant jam. *Intourist* was quite flexible in allowing us to wander on our own.

### Tuesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> - Moscow



Assumption Cathedral

We were off to a functioning Russian Orthodox monastery founded by St. Sergius 1345. Among other edifices, the monastery includes The Holy Spirit Church, its own Assumption Cathedral and Bell Tower. It functions as an important center of education. We were told by the monk guide that there were 6 seminaries and 2 academies (for advanced learning) left in Russia. It was an old, walled monastery, with once-beautiful mosque-like domes and ornate gilded interiors. Sections were being restored. Nevertheless, the place was dirty, populated by the elderly. We learned that few younger people attended; that the clergy and the sermons are controlled by the state i.e. restricted to considerations of the abstract. Two new altars had been built this year using recycled gold from original decorations. The practice of religion was obviously not in a growth mode.

In a Georgian restaurant that evening, I got my first example of the problem that the state has in integrating 15 republics, each with its own customs, language/dialect. I was in the company of a Georgian and his wife. We were served a typical Russian/Georgian meal of shashlik, i.e. lamb shish kebab, plus several exotic delicacies. The average meal with wine costs 25-30 rubles. They were

extremely hospitable – he insisted in paying for the meal. As a sailor he had spent 7 years in the US and was convinced that Georgians and Yanks are alike, but that Georgians did not get along with Russians [JT note: fast forward to Georgian independence in 1991!].

There was rioting in Georgia last year when local officials tried to tone down a celebration involving Stalin (a Georgian) at which time the republic was out of bounds to tourists. It seems that Georgians are wealthier than Russians - likely related to the success of their agriculture - wine a specialty. It is not uncommon for a Georgian collectivist to earn 20k to 30k rubles/mth. They are seen in GUM buying gold trinkets as investments



At St. Sergius

### Wednesday, July 30 - Moscow

A free day today. Dan, Rip and I were off to the US embassy to see Mr. Barnes. One of his duties as under-secretary is to pour over Russian publications and update the Library of Congress, others. One of the subjects we talked about was anti-Semitism in Russia and he agreed with other comments I'd heard. With respect to discrimination, his opinion is that there is little inequality existing. The "Doctors' Plot" of a few years ago was reportedly related to attempts by Jews to establish contact with an international Jewish cause [JT note: Stalin was an anti-Semite. In the early '50's, many Jews were summarily tortured, executed. Among them, dozens of doctors were arrested for plotting to poison Soviet leaders.

However, Stalin died shortly before the trial. All were subsequently exonerated.] “They are free to practice their religion but not when it conflicts with the state”. The future should be interesting on this issue.

We also talked about criticism of the state in regard to Dudinstev’s critical book “Not by Bread Alone” [JT note: His 1956 book was a criticism of the Russian bureaucracy and immensely popular at the time – though criticized strongly by the Party. By the time political resistance waned, the content had been outdated by stronger criticisms like that in Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*,] According to Barnes, the game is that the state must free an issue for public debate. Once done, subject matter like the bureaucracy, art trends, can be discussed in the public sphere.

In questioning him about the qualifications of US diplomats abroad, he replied that a formal program for Russian Studies started in 1950. For instance, Harvard and Columbia have Russian centers and another is being set up in Germany. Barnes himself speaks Russian and seems to be familiar with the history of the country.

In the last few days some of us went swimming at Silver Creek – a bathing establishment out of town on the Mosqba R. that is very popular with the Moscovites and the Leningradians.

Later in the evening we leave for Leningrad to arrive at 8AM. Diesel engine this time, not a coal burner – no soot in the bedroom. Chocolae is expensive everywhere. Tea in your compartment for 35 kopeks, i.e. 9 cents (4 rubles: 1 USD; 100 kopeks: rouble). Some of our group (Tapley, Kesler, Schultz & Butler) fenced into the wee hours with an East German and our guide Marianna on the always-ripe topic of Communism vs. Capitalism. We came the closest ever to leaving Pidge behind. Dave Davis added a few Moscow verses to the Warsaw Blues ditty: e.g.

- *Ten to one they’re robbing us*
- *Too much noise in this here tomb*
- *Badges, chewing gum, you get rich*

### Thursday, July 31 – Leningrad

We get settled at the Leningrad Hotel and eat at the Astoria. All Intourist hotels are crowded. Then we were taken on a Leningrad tour by Michael, a dogmatic communist teacher of English. Our route took us along the Niva River (stretching from Lake Lagoda to the Gulf of Finland), viewing famous buildings in pastel shade of blue, green, red, the Winter Palace, Lenin’s Smolny headquarters (Bolshevik headquarters during the 1917 revolution), Kerensky’s headquarters, Lenin (Petrovsky in 2012) Stadium, etc.



Peterhof Palace

In the PM, swimming in the Baltic and one of the best-informed times we’ve had. Marianna is getting much fun with the group. Our bus driver, who took us to Peterhof Palace on the Baltic, was either a very competent driver or a Russian juvenile delinquent. He flew there and back. This “fountainous” palace has been completely restored since the war (the Germans advanced to within 70 km. of Leningrad). We encountered this same push to restore in many places, resulting in, I’m sure, benefits for tourism and citizen recreation. Frisbee was introduced to the Russian beach and received favourably. Wilder annoyed Foster by hanging her ‘undergarments’ on one of the gilded statues.



**Friday, August 1 – Leningrad**

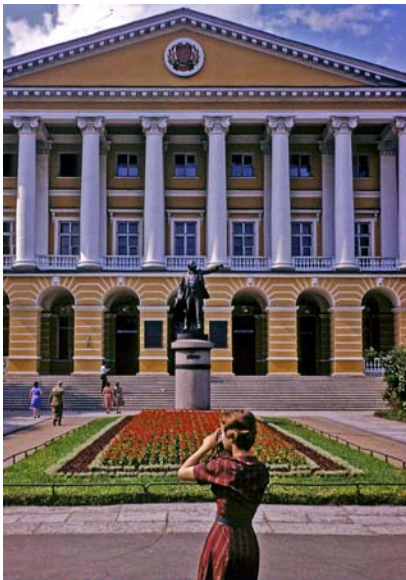
Winter Palace

To the Hermitage Museum (1764) in the AM. Over 1000 rooms, 6 buildings, one of which is the Winter Palace, a historically important locale in Russian history. The Bloody Sunday massacre of demonstrators occurred there in 1905; then in 1917, the army (Bolsheviks) stormed the palace to overthrow the Kerensky government.

The buildings contain priceless paintings arranged in chronological order to depict the evolution of art. 33 rooms of Italian paintings ( da Vinci, Rafael, Michelangelo), Rembrandts, many Dutch Masters, one of the best French Impressionist collections anywhere (Degas, Van Gogh, Cezanne, Gauguin), 34 Picassos, Houdon's statue of Voltaire, and on and on. Our English-speaking guide, on the scientific staff of the Hermitage, was excellent.

In the PM, we first visited the Peter & Paul Fortress (1703). It was never effective as a line of defence, but worked OK as prison for such as Dostoevsky, Tito, Trotsky. The tour was uneventful except for Van Camp's tape recorder "rendering" the *Colonel Bogey* march from the *Bridge on the River Kwai*.

Later, the Museum of the History of Religion. This experience was as expected given that the state is officially atheistic. 'Religion is the opium of the people'. The building was formerly a Russian Orthodox Church. (We had already seen churches converted into warehouses). On display were the hypocrisies and failings in the history of the Church, with little to balance on the positive side. Common scenes in paint or stone were: the lack of attention during sermons; the porcine priest with his flask of wine, the wars undertaken in the name of the Church; the Spanish Inquisition; the Darrow/Bryan court duel over the teaching of evolution in Tennessee; associations with the fascist causes. They also managed to work in the race issue in the US.



Lenin Headquarters/Smolny

Khrushchev's government is running an active anti-religious policy, which has been more or less the case since the Russian revolution. Loyalty to the state, not to religion, must prevail. The museum is just one many anti-religious pressures by the state. Others include school teaching, absence of state support and overt restrictions on religious practices. It is significant that there are only 19 churches remaining in Leningrad. Although religion still has some hold on the, mostly elderly, populace, it appears to be rapidly losing ground.

In the evening, a few went to the cinema to see Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*. Schultz knew the plot but said that technically, the movie was below US standards.

**Saturday, August 2 – Leningrad**

Off to a Pioneer Camp for youngsters. The two main student organizations are the Komsomol (Young Communist League) and the Young Pioneers. As close as I can determine, the Komsomol is more directly related to the schools – publishing school newspapers, appointing leaders to Pioneer organizations, and are generally more political. The Pioneers are more analogous to our Boy Scouts (9 to 14 years old), although their activities are permeated by principles relating to the Communist state, e.g. Pioneer Pledge – Q: *Are you ready?* A: *I am always ready to continue the construction of the communist state.*

This camp was a vacation camp – one that was not restricted to Pioneer members. Attendance is controlled through the Trade Union organizations. Workers have only to request through their superiors permission to send their child to summer camp and they receive a unit coupon for admission – a unit is 12 days. Cost to poorer workers is nil. Camps are located in the cities, suburbs, the Crimea, the Caucasus. Those close to home return at night. The leaders are thoroughly politically indoctrinated. We met one supervisor who traveled from camp to camp as an expert in children's activities (3000 rubles/mth.)



Pioneer Camp

The camp we visited was outfitted for all the regular summer activities – volleyball, swimming. We danced with the children at play and raced with them in teams with names like *Friendship* and *Peace*.

Free time. A preferred spot was the big bookstore on Nievsky Prospect opposite the Religious museum where the popular purchases were:

- Peace posters - to be used by Ehrlich for wallpaper
  - *October Days* by Krupskaya
  - *What the October Revolution Gave the Peasants*
- Books -
  - *Letters between Stalin & FDR, Stalin Churchill, etc.* 1940-1945
  - *Peekskill, USA* by Howard Fast

Also popular were boat rides on the Niva, street-roaming. The demand for free time came not only because the key tourist attractions were exhausted, but also because *Intourist* did a poor job both in scheduling those events we attended, and not coming up with additional suggestions. They generally missed meeting departure/arrival times. Nevertheless, “Intourist” was the magic word for our group. It could usually gain you entry whenever reluctance was shown. “Nyet, Nyet, Intourest” was the password.

Red tape permeated our movements in this city. Stu, Rick and Dave tried to leave Russia through Odessa but were bogged down by protocol. I tried to cash German traveler's cheques – the bank eventually had to phone Moscow to get permission to cash them because an exact template of their sample check was not available.

*Intourist* accommodations, as basic as they are (particularly Tourist “B” with no soap, no hot water, simple fare, mediocre guides) are stellar compared to the vast majority of the city housing. We had no difficulty in getting around the city. The metro takes you near the suburbs and a trolley ride brings you to the poorer areas.

The old buildings are characteristically 3,4 or 5 stories (much like Paris) with people packed in to capacity – then every one inhales and more are added, it seems. The new buildings, prefabs built to

alleviate these conditions, are being built as fast as the 6<sup>th</sup> 5-year Plan allows. But there is a long way to go.

Then you get to the suburbs. Houses are old and rickety. Streets are unpaved or cobble stoned. The houses are unpainted and drab – in keeping with the drab clothing of the inhabitants. Everywhere you look there are evidences of poverty. Drop in to the local store and view the available goods. Very little selection and what there is seems to be of questionable quality. These conditions were apparent in Leningrad and Moscow



Russian/Finnish Border

Now for a little bit of social criticism. (JT 2012 note: **Remember, I was in my 20's when I wrote this**). From listening to, and reading of the accounts of other observers of Russian life, these substandard living conditions are used by the West as attacks on the communist way of life. It seems to me to be fallacious premise. The two countries are at different stages of development. WWII leveled much of Russia. The question to be answered is whether the Russian system is capable of providing western-level amenities in the future to this country of 2.5 billion people. There is evidence to indicate that this is may be realizable [JT 2012 Note: I was wrong]. For

instance, one recurring comment in our various dialogues was that the Russian citizen didn't want war because only recently had they achieved a significant increase in living standards – and they weren't willing to gamble with it.

Further on this comparison of the two systems. You can criticize specific features of the two all night (which we often did) – such as the police state, lack of consumer goods, religious policy, totalitarianism, and aggression in Lebanon. But it seems to me that the overriding, background issue is that of freedom. Capitalism in a democratic context will hopefully become less plutocratic [JT 2012 Note: Wrong again], narrowing the gap between the social extremes. Communism, on the other hand, will have to afford more individual freedom if it is to survive as a viable form of social/political organization. Therefore, the question to be put by the West is: Can the communist state naturally evolve into a form that is democratic in the Western sense, with the ideal freedoms that the Marxist-Leninist predicts. The jury is out. The main issue is freedom. Not so much that it is obviously non-existent now, but rather, whether it can ever be achieved.



Wilder - Russia to Finland - Tostevin

The immediate question concerns the possibility of coexistence between the two states. If Russia is committed to international aggression as it originally was designed (i.e. by Lenin) to be, then it must be an ongoing battle for dominance. On the other hand, the current interpretation of Khrushchev's policy is that while he wants the Russian hold in Europe and Asia to be secure, international communist victories will come about by natural evolution of inferior economies to stronger ones, rather than by force. This latter sounds good and provides the most hope. Evidence for this conclusion must be looked for. If it is

realizable, the tensions in the Middle East, Far East, Korea, Eastern Europe, etc. could eventually resolve themselves over time [JT 2012 Note: Wrong once more].

Perhaps idealistically, this is where my head is at based on our limited experience in the three Iron Curtain countries.

### **Sunday, August 3 – Depart Russia**

In the evening, we partied accompanied by the talents of guitarist Ehrlich. Wilder extracted rubles from even the most reluctant of the group to provide the vodka and wine. Transportation via Finland? From Leningrad to Helsinki: 63 rubles (\$6.30). From Helsinki to Stockholm: by boat (deck passage, 10% discount for groups over 10), approx. \$9.00 ea.

Someone added another refrain for the Moscow Blues:

*Spent some time in this here place  
Learned a lot in this here place  
We've got the Moscow Blues*

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Epilogue:

From Finland, 5 of us (Camerik, Shaw, Van Camp, Wilder, Tostevin) rented a Volkswagen van and traveled back via Stockholm, Copenhagen, Venice, Switzerland (Sion), Holland, Brussels (the World's Fair) and Munich.



