

Courier Visits Red Square

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With time and patience, however, you detect beneath their veneer of remoteness a curiosity about Americans and a willingness to communicate and to understand them.

They are a proud people. Proud of their system and what it has accomplished in the years since its origin in 1917. They are quick to point out that before the revolution only one third of the people were barely educated while now, under new compulsory educational laws requiring 10 years of schooling, more than two thirds are educated.

They pridefully show you the huge maze of modern apartment dwellings which are rapidly filling the Soviet Union's skylines although living space is still at a premium. More often than not there are four and five-member families sharing a three-room apartment, and it is not unusual to find four families using one kitchen. But the Russians are determined to elevate their lifestyle and are uncomplaining about the sacrifices required to do so.

So far, the government's five-year plans have not included an overabundance of consumer commodities or services. A Russian's day, therefore, consists of a "hurry up and wait" ritual for just about everything that comprises his daily living. Long waiting lines are the hallmark of his existence; lines form for taxis, restaurants, museums, theaters and especially stores. Supermarkets and large department stores are a rarity, and the expediting of sales is an archaic process whereby you stand in line

to purchase an item, move to another line to pay for it, and then back to the first line to pick up the merchandise.

Tourists have an advantage over this waiting game. No matter what a line is for or how long it is they are automatically ushered ahead of the patiently waiting Russian citizen.

Visitors also have flexibility in their travels through Russian cities. Though it is not encouraged, a tourist may forgo scheduled tours and go exploring by himself. It can prove to be a difficult and frustrating venture because of the language barrier but it is the way to learn about a city and its people.

Moscow, with its seven million people, is crisscrossed with miles of tree lined boulevards (10 and 14 lanes wide) which, because of minimal private car ownership, are free of traffic jams. Its metro system is an underground masterpiece of arched white marble caverns decorated with colorful mosaics and glittering chandeliers. The subways are clean, efficient and safe.

The Russian capital is the political center of the U.S.S.R. and the business-like Muscovites go about their daily life in a brisk, orderly manner. Living in the shadow of the Kremlin with its highly visible secret police tends to make them more reserved than their fellow countrymen.

In Kiev, capital of the Ukraine, the people express more zest for life. They openly enjoy all experiences whether playing dominos, drinking their strong

vodka, dancing to their rousing folk music or cooking sumptuous meals. The Ukrainians delight in serving their native dishes to guests and then glow with satisfaction if every morsel is devoured.

Life becomes low-keyed in Yalta, one of the many health resorts that dot the Crimean Peninsula. This picturesque city on the Black Sea is a mecca for Russian vacationers. It is also home for pensioners and war veterans who having no one to care for them are sent by the State to the lovely sanitariums which nestle among Greek cypresses.

Russians of all ages enjoy the outdoors and this fact was never more apparent than in Yalta. In the off season temperatures dip low but that doesn't bother the denizens who are out on the pebbled beaches at 6 a.m. exercising, sunning and swimming in the frigid Black Sea.

The living pace picks up again in Leningrad which from the time it was founded by Peter the Great in 1703 until the 1917 Revolution served as the nation's capital.

The polluted air and water, not evident in other cities, attests to its industrialization. Buildings pockmarked with artillery shell holes as well as the huge memorial cemetery which serves as the common grave for 900,000 people tell the story of the city's 900-day siege by the Nazis during World War II.

As Russia's "window on Europe" Leningrad has a more sophisticated atmosphere and the people are more fashionably dressed and in tune with the Western world.

But whether a Russian lives in Moscow, Kiev, Yalta or Leningrad he loves his ice cream, drinks water glasses of vodka in one gulp, pampers his children, enjoys his sports, and instinctively barbers.

Russian youth who have a command of English will openly converse with tourists especially on American politics ranging from Watergate to Kissinger to the presidential election. The conversation, however, is invariably their lead into a business transaction, trading for chewing gum, cigarettes and lighters or outright purchases of blue jeans, belts, and camera equipment.

Though the government tends to overlook these business ventures there is a money black market it will not tolerate. Visitors from more liberal societies who think they can transgress in this area are mistaken. Though the fearful shadow of Siberian exile has seemingly lessened over the last decade, Russia keeps a close watch on its people and a closer one on her visitors.

There is the ever-present secret police; the militia with its voluntary citizen helpmates who observe their neighbors; and added to all this is the constant presence of the Soviet military.

Russians are accustomed to this vigilance and generally ignore it, or try to outwit it. This deceives a visitor into thinking that repressive surveillance isn't a serious problem after all. Many incidents, one in particular, dispelled this impression.

In Red Square, while tourists and citizens were maneuvering for positions from which to watch the changing of the guard a young Russian asked to speak with us so he could practice his English. While we talked, a man easily recognizable as secret police because of his dark trenchcoat and narrow brimmed hat pulled low over the eyes, had edged close to our group. The young Russian who had been quietly discussing politics and grievances involving his government was warned of our uninvited guest and quickly disappeared into the crowd — it was as if he had never been there. Our shadow stayed with us until we left the Square and headed back toward the hotel.



Ordained at 19, Then Dies After

Father Cesare Bisognin, a 19-year-old cancer patient, is ordained a priest on April 4 at his home in Turin by Cardinal Michele Pellegrino, archbishop of Turin. Father Bisognin, one of the youngest priests in the history of the Catholic Church, succumbed to his disease and died April 28, 24 days after his ordination. The cardinal had asked Pope Paul to grant a dispensation from the minimum age requirement for priests. Doctors had said the young man had only a few weeks left to live. As Cardinal Pellegrino later told the story, "The Pope did not even let me finish giving him the details before he gave me the authorization to ordain." (RNS)

A DAY WITH MARY

Geneva — The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima has arranged a "Day with Mary" for Sunday, May 23, in the Geneva Theatre. Speakers will be Joey Lomagnino, described as the blind apostle of the Blessed Mother, and Father Edward Shamon, pastor of St. Aloysius Church, Auburn. The meeting begins at 1 p.m.

ANointing RITE AT ST. SALOMES

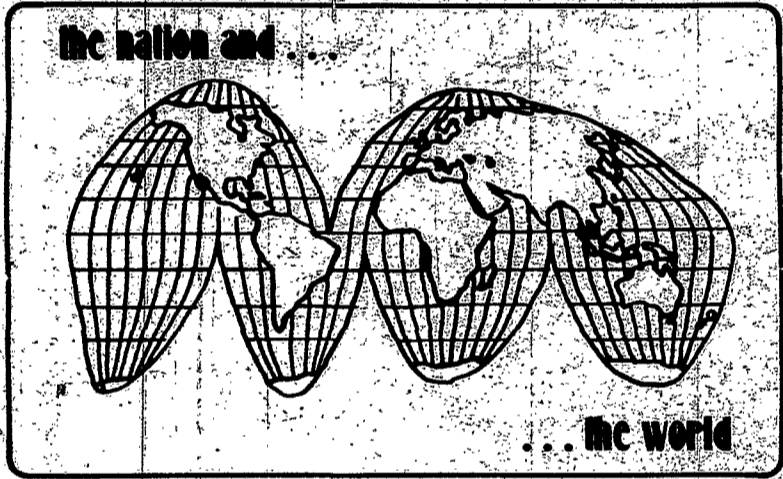
The priests of St. Salome's Church will perform the rite of the Anointing of the Sick during the 12:15 Mass on Sunday, June 6. A reception will follow. Anyone who has a chronic illness, is sick emotionally or physically or is elderly is welcome to come. Those who wish to be anointed should notify Lorraine Curtis, 544-2062, or Dorothy Schaubert, 467-4385, by May 26.

CHESTERTON SOCIETY

The Chesterton Society will meet at Nazareth Arts Center at 8 p.m. Thursday, May 27. The group will hear a tape of G.K. Chesterton made by the British Broadcasting Corporation. Prior to the meeting, the group will dine at the Depot Restaurant.

HOSTS NEEDED

Penn Yan — Members of St. Michael's Church are asked to "Share Your Family." American host families are needed for the months of July and August for 400 French children from Catholic Schools in France. They are coming to experience the American way of life as members of American families. Anyone interested may call Stephen and Alice Murphy (716-265-0925 or 315-923-9671).



From Courier-Journal Services

Nice news: a new group called Women Exploited (WE), consisting of women who have had abortions, is organizing in Chicago and St. Louis to dissuade others from going to abortion clinics. Lillian R. Block, managing editor and director of Religious News Service, a major source for the Courier-Journal's national and international news, has become the first woman and non-Catholic to receive the coveted St. Francis DeSales Award of the Catholic Press Association. Dr. Mildred Jefferson, chairman of the National Right To Life Committee and the first black woman to receive an M.D. from Harvard Medical School will receive an honorary degree from St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Ind.

Believe it or not department: In Capetown, South Africa, interracial couples may dance together in the new "international hotels" — providing the black partner comes from another country. The chairman of the agency in charge of enforcing the latest apartheid regulation said he couldn't say how hotel staffers were to distinguish between black persons from South Africa and from other countries. That pornographic movie on the life of Our Lord is actually going into production despite the outraged protests of Christians throughout the world. It looked for a while as if the movie, to be produced and directed by Jens Joergen Thorson would be quashed, but the porno peddler apparently has gotten money from European atheist groups.

In News from Rome: Father Pedro Arrupe, superior general of the Society of Jesus, has condemned the expulsion of eight Jesuits from Paraguay as a "grave violation by the government of their basic human rights." For the second time Pope Paul has offered words of encouragement and comfort to the people suffering from the devastating quake which hit northern Italy May 7. Earlier, the Pontiff had sent \$60,000 to the region for relief work. [A story on Page 2 of this issue tells how dioceses can contribute to alleviate the suffering in this area.]

It takes a Big Man: Boston's Cardinal Humberto Medeiros has apologized to the people of South Boston for what he said in a recent interview on the school busing controversy there. He had said that he wouldn't go to the area for fear he would "get stoned" by the people there. In a letter read from the pulpits of the area, the cardinal said: "I do not like to accept it, but Our Lord has proven once again that I am human and that we are all sinners. I accept it. My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord in South Boston, I do love you; I am sorry. I ask your Christian compassion. Forgive me."

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