

UNC student visits Russia

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By the end of the trip, the schedule of events for each city was all too familiar: Always, boastful guides gave us bus tours of the "new residential areas" (all similarly reminiscent of American high-rise projects.) Always, the culmination of the city tour was a visit to the Beriozka shop—where westerners, and westerners only, could trade their hard currency for some Russian souvenirs (chatzkies) to take back home.

The guides painted a favorable picture through their personal appearances too. While the head guide Nellie was older and in looks conveyed her motherly role, the individual ones for each city were young women—always comely, fashionable and, sometimes, just seductive. Our guide in Tallinn, for example, the most open of Soviet cities, sported a denim skirt and tight sweater along with expensive Italian sunglasses (and boasted of a recent trip to Italy, which probably explained her dress.)

Helen, barely 20 years and our guide in Moscow, was so attractive as to garner one American follower from our trip (has been studying Russian, hoping to get back to see her); yet in spite of coquettish actions, she assured us all of her propriety in other spheres.

Helen neither "smokes nor drinks nor wears blue jeans," she said. She disapproves of the innocent Russian children who incessantly invoke tourists for the only English word they know—"chewing gum."

inroads to knowledge, they wined and dined us like VIP's, in a country where there are purportedly none. Three multi-course meals daily, tickets to the Bolshoi, a direct line to see Lenin in his tomb. (By waving our American passports, we cut a four-hour wait to 15 minutes and bypassed the thousands of Russians who had come from afar to glance at their hero.) Even when we boarded the Aeroflot planes (notorious for their distinct odors and ugly stewardesses), we were driven down the short runway and allowed to board before any Russians did so.

In Russia, foreigners go first-class, but only those who travel in groups. Traveling alone is taboo, as far as the Soviet government is concerned, and the government seems to have a subtle way of making its opinion known. They will not and/or cannot handle individual tourists. Two foreign scientists, for example, although invited by the Soviet government to a special conference in Minsk, ventured to other cities—and spent seven hours searching for a hotel room in Moscow, another seven in Leningrad. "All the hotel clerks kept us waiting at the desk—then told us they were full. Likely a lie," they said.

Leaving the group

Just as traveling alone is discouraged, so is straying from the group. Nevertheless, we felt it necessary to try to break the scrutiny, to encounter some students who, we hoped, would speak frankly about their lives. This often led to unfortunate circumstances.

After indulgent drinking, always preceded by friendly toasts, Hank got a bit shaky. He walked outside, passed out on the street and awoke the next morning in a Russian jail.

The charge: public drunkenness. "I woke up in a cell about 10 ft. by 15 ft. with five beds crammed in it," Hank said, admitting he could remember little. "All I had on was my underwear and some blood."

A few hours later Hank acknowledged a small hole in the roof of his mouth, and recalled "them sticking something like a riding crop up there to hold me up." He recalled "them (the police) thumping their necks and laughing at me,"—gestures, he later found out from our Russian guide Nellie, that mean that somebody is drunk. Nellie also explained something else to Hank: When most people are thrown in jail, they usually get their hair shaved off. Hank was rather fortunate.

While the majority of Russian students seem very serious about their studies, a few like Alexander and Vladimir spend their time "hanging out," trying to meet foreigners like us. Some delight in complaining about their lifestyles, some simply prefer to practice their English, but most seem to plead for a glimpse of American popular culture. They appear less concerned about the traditional freedoms we associate with America than about the one freedom they want: to rock 'n roll.

One evening in a busy district of Kiev, four Russian students approached us. Mila, 23, was well-versed in the English language, intent on mastering it. She yearned for theoretical works on English grammar, and spoke of her life's dream: to read the Bible. Unlike her comrades, Mila was not accustomed to encountering Americans on the street.

Throughout the night, she expressed many fears. "You must ask for a table," she said her almost perfect English as we entered a restaurant, "because if we do, they'll turn us away."

Later, on the street, she warned, "Walk far ahead of us; the police are right behind."

And when we decided to go to one of the student's flats, whispers abounded and she relayed to me that one of her apparent friends ought not to go. "He's a spy," she said.

No questions asked. We got rid of the accused and took a taxi to a young man's (Sasha) flat. Mila left us (like most young adults, she still lived with her parents and had to obey their early curfew), so the rest of the night we relied on badly broken English, our four Russian words, and a dictionary in which we could point.

Sasha's three-room flat was on the ninth floor of one of the "new residential high-rises." He and his wife of one year were, according to him, very lucky to have moved in. "Most newweds live with their parents for a long while," he said, "because finding a flat is almost impossible."

While the couple had little furniture (the bedroom had only two twin beds, a small mirror and a dresser), their pride was a big black box in the den—an American made tape deck. Queen and Slade carried us throughout the night, recordings they had acquired through a lucrative underground rock network.

Sasha and his wife showered us with tea and pastries, trinkets and pictures of Russian "Football" stars. We, in turn, opened up the large purses we carried for times like this and gave away albums, blue jeans, and *Rolling Stone* magazines.



Russian women are allowed few of life's extras

Photo by Martha Stevens

"Elton John! Chicago! Marantz speakers!" Sasha exclaimed, pointing to any name or face he recognized in *Rolling Stone*. "You make me so very happy with your gifts."

To Sasha, this was America. Rock stars and blue jeans and fancy apparatus. This was the America that was luring Russian youth.

Westernization

For better or for worse, Russia in many ways seems to be hitchhiking along with the American way of life. Western music, long scorned by authorities, is now coming out of the closet—and if you take a Hydrofoil excursion to Leningrad's elegant



Photo by Harriet Sugar

Carbonated water for only two kopecks (3 cents) . . . but glasses provided are rarely washed

Summer Palace on any given day, you will be treated to the Beatles blaring silly love songs. A Russian recording, of course.

Eager for his piece of America, one Russian man stopped me on the streets. "American cigarette?" he inquired. "Playboy magazines?" "Bracelet?" he begged, pointing to the art deco band on my wrist and wondering if it were "modern American art?" "Give it to me," he continually demanded—a phrase we encountered so often that it seemed less of a rude request and simply an innocent echo.

A young boy wanted a "packit" of chewing gum so badly that he handed

me his leather belt in exchange (which I, of course, refused.) And at Moscow beauty salon, the hairdresser, speaking in French, offered "any price" for my hand blow-dryer. Curiously studying my hairstyle, she wondered if it were "a la mode."

Throughout Russia, those who approached us were almost filled with the Schlitz mentality of grabbing for all the gusto they could get—very western, very American. But the evidences of westernization, and the desire to be westernized, seemed to more often and more easily appear in places far removed for Moscow, the hub of Soviet control.

While the capital closes down at 11 p.m., bars in the far western city of Tallinn are still rolling at 2 a.m. Here, in this city right across the narrow stretch of water from Finland, we encountered efficient elevators (Finnish made), modern buildings and furniture (Finnish design), few pictures of Lenin, department stores with no lunch hours and, to our relief—"real" toilet paper and toilet seats.

All for the first time.

In hindsight, though, some of the semblances of westernization seem just that—mere shades. An article in a Soviet magazine boasted the following new product on its Recent Inventions page: "Women no longer need worry about effects of rain or tears on their eye make-up. Research workers at the Rasvet Cosmetic Plants in Moscow have come up with a new type of mascara with increased moisture resistance."

The signs continued. Cheeses, which once were placed straight on the table from the farm, sometimes came wrapped in throw-away metallic foil.

But the cheese was in airports frequented by foreigners; and the magazine printed in English (and as we later discovered, sold in America too)—all which is to say that these latter examples seemed to be more of the same show-and-tell performance, a way to tell

westerners "We're catching up with you."

Unfortunately, throw-away aluminum wrappers and tear-proof make-up are not the most desirable pawns in a game of catching-up. When your opponent moves his queen up four spaces, that doesn't mean that your most advantageous play is to do the same.

Furthermore, everyone in Russia is not yet on the board: Waterproof mascara ain't for the masses, and access, the key word, depends on how well-mannered you are.

Automobiles (some Russian made, some Italian made, and the most chic resembling a late 1950s European style) may be numerous, buzzing chaotically about city streets, but the same catches are involved. Even if you're fortunate enough to purchase one, the costs are exorbitant, superhighways nonexistent, and spare parts sparse.

Televisions too are abundant, Russians buying them to watch thrilling sports events, but all programs are government sponsored and thus the remainder of them, a bit dull. (One young boy in Tallinn, a devotee of American sit-coms, took delight in describing the method by which he intercepted such programs via Finnish airwaves—Finland being right across the water.)

In much of Russia, however, many of the old ways still thrive. Refrigeration is primarily for the privileged, most families still using window sills to do the job (and thus having to shop almost every day). In stores, clerks still count on abacuses. For personal hygiene, women still rely on cotton when menstruation begins.

But for the most part, Russians just accept things as they are. They have been conditioned to do so, and know it best not to cry out. Perhaps their acquiescent attitude is best expressed by the words of a Russian peasant who paused from his work for a photograph with our group: "Work a little slower, live a little longer."



Photo by Martha Stevens

A Russian salesman exhibits his wares

"We never entice children to do this. It is indecent," Helen said, then shooed them away.

"Do you like Solzhenitsyn?" asked one American.

"He's boring," she responded, cutting off the conversation while hinting she had glanced at his works.

"And Nabokov?"

A firm no.

While the Russians denied us many

Hank (not his real name), an American and heavy imbiber, was in a Moscow bar one evening conversing with Alexander and Vladimir, economics and finance students at Moscow University. The talk was typical student issues: blue jeans ("We always wear them in our leisure time, but we must wear suits and ties to (school.)") and sex (Some Russian girls will do it, some won't).

Last chance for Yack portraits

Photographers will be on campus for two weeks next month to shoot more portraits for the 1977 *Yackety Yack*. Any students who did not have their portraits made last semester or who were dissatisfied with their proofs may have their portraits taken.

Sign-up for sittings begins today with tables being set up in the Union and Y-

Court. Appointments can be made from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday near the Union desk and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Y-Court.

Portraits will be made Jan. 31 through Feb. 11. Sittings will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays portraits will be made from 1 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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ROCKET BOOKS

THE Daily Crossword by Mel Rosen

<p>ACROSS</p> <p>1 Sonora snack</p> <p>5 Senator</p> <p>10 Good-looking</p> <p>14 Norway king</p> <p>15 Gene Tierney movie</p> <p>16 European capital</p> <p>17 Word on the wall</p>	<p>18 Not pertinent</p> <p>20 Sticks out</p> <p>22 Light helmet</p> <p>23 Work units</p> <p>24 Din</p> <p>26 Medical cleansing</p> <p>29 Season</p> <p>30 Recipe notation</p> <p>33 All het up</p>	<p>34 Veronica's family</p> <p>35 Beam</p> <p>36 "— well..."</p> <p>37 Vehicles for the energy crisis</p> <p>38 Door part</p> <p>39 Berr</p> <p>40 Congealed</p> <p>41 Set of events</p> <p>42 Cape —</p> <p>43 Regretted</p> <p>44 Red ink</p> <p>45 Is prolific</p> <p>47 Moscow veto</p> <p>48 County</p> <p>50 Somewhat plump; Fr.</p> <p>54 Hockey's "sin bin"</p> <p>57 Skirt length</p> <p>58 Olympus resident</p> <p>59 Poker word</p>	<p>60 "— Old Cowhand"</p> <p>61 Rambler</p> <p>62 Church areas</p> <p>63 Arrived</p> <p>DOWN</p> <p>1 Serious work</p> <p>2 Mr. Bell, to friends</p> <p>3 Jargon</p> <p>4 Plays the gourmand</p> <p>5 Kind of hammer</p> <p>6 I.R.S. concern</p> <p>7 Worn places</p> <p>8 Hockey name</p> <p>9 Barnyard sound</p> <p>10 Busy ones</p> <p>11 Exercise form</p> <p>12 Swing around</p>	<p>13 Throw a party</p> <p>19 Manicure items</p> <p>21 Press upon</p> <p>24 Without protection</p> <p>25 Corrida cheers</p> <p>26 Climbing vine</p> <p>27 Composer</p> <p>28 February Harold</p> <p>29 Bluffed through</p> <p>31 Pierre's room</p> <p>32 Writer</p> <p>33 Ernie and others</p> <p>34 Prefers</p> <p>37 Oz man</p> <p>38 Affecting the body</p> <p>40 Basket for fish</p> <p>41 Student</p> <p>44 Bobcats</p> <p>46 Take out</p> <p>47 Loop</p> <p>48 Box</p> <p>49 Good guy</p> <p>50 Batting stats.</p> <p>51 Ohio city</p> <p>52 Cheese</p> <p>53 Prong</p> <p>55 Nonsense syllable</p> <p>56 Bark</p>
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