



**RIDING A CAMEL** was one of the thrills which Miss Ruley enjoyed, amid the historic and religious scenes of the Holy Land. In all, she visited more than a dozen countries on this trip of pleasure and learning.

## *Russians Know Little About Us, Home Economist Reports*

**Bessie Jean Ruley**

Pleasure and professional observation were combined last summer in travel which included the countries of Portugal, Spain, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, Greece, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, Finland and the iron curtain countries of Russia, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Like any American tourist, I was interested in seeing the places I had read about in school. And like a typical tourist, I was interested in the people, the shops, the handicrafts, the transportation systems, the agriculture and industry.

### **Professional Interest, Too**

As a Home Economist in the study area of child development, I was particularly — and professionally — interested in the schools, education, child care, family life, sanitation and recreational facilities.

This report, however, will be lim-

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ited to my observations in Russia, especially as regards the children.

It is difficult for an American tourist to learn much about the Russian people unofficially and informally. The Russians are chary about talking to a foreigner, although we guess that they are eager to be informed about us.

For example, it is difficult to get an individual Russian to discuss his life and family and anything else to an American visitor, but if one does he is surely quickly surrounded by his compatriots who listen eagerly, and offer to bridge the difficulties of translation. They like to listen, but they seem defensive and fearsome at actual conversational participation.

### **Don't Know About U.S.**

Likewise, their knowledge of us and our nation is abysmally meager. Those we could talk to did recognize the name of a city, New York. But they seemed completely unaware of a country, the United States, and only vaguely knew of the American continent. They are closed in upon themselves, and it will take something dramatic to open their minds and their lives to us.

During the summer one sees few

children on the street, as the majority are sent to the young pioneer and youth camps. Since many of the young mothers work to supplement the family income, it is necessary to get the children into some organized program. The preschool-aged children are cared for in the state-supported preschools, most of which seem primarily concerned with custodial care.

In these schools the children appeared overly disciplined and quiet. The outdoor play equipment was of prime importance and composed of large pieces of rugged, realistic objects, such as row boats, adult-sized ladders, etc. One saw little evidence of creative activities associated with preschools in the United States, such as painting, clay, etc.

However, the schools seemed full to overflowing with growing green plants and wall posters of "Happy Workers" in the fields. The teachers were in uniforms and seemed in complete command of the children. I noticed little evidence of free play, but much evidence of the attempt to glorify work in the minds of the children.

### **A Long School Day**

For school-aged children, during the winter months, the school has a planned program where the child may stay in the classroom with the teacher, do his homework, take a long walk, eat supper, and be prepared to go home when his mother calls for him after her work day is finished at six or seven p.m.

Since the family apartment is fairly small, this helps to lessen the space tension at home. In the apartment houses I was able to visit, I saw families living in one-room apartments and sharing a kitchen and bath with seven, or even 10, other families. Our Intourist guide considered herself lucky because she shared the kitchen and the bath facilities with only five other families. Of course, in the smaller towns and villages, the people still seem to live much as they did prior to communism, as many of the families occupy one small house alone. I was assured that the housing

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shortage would be nonexistent in the year 1970.

For the most part, in the cities, the Russian people were friendly for short periods of time, but were brief in their encounters with us and seemed almost relieved when we ended the conversation. They were curious about us, but not to the extent that they would ask questions, except in very few cases. They were interested when we started conversations with others, and would openly eavesdrop.

### Women Do Farm Work

In contrast to this, the workers in the farm fields waved and smiled at us as we drove by. They were cutting wheat by hand, plowing with primitive plows, and much of this was done by women. The women, almost without exception, wore head scarves (babushkas), fairly long dresses, aprons and heavy men's shoes. This seemed in contrast to our ranch wives who probably would wear jeans while driving the tractors.

We noticed very few pieces of farm machinery on the smaller farms. However, on the collective farms there seemed to be some larger pieces of equipment, most of which was fairly old and in poor repair. Most of the cattle I saw were Brown Swiss and, according to the farmer in the group, looked "to be suffering from a lack of food and were the result of poor breeding practices".

### Clothing Shoddy, Expensive

My visit to the shops and stores in the U.S.S.R. was, without a doubt, one of the strangest experiences I have ever had. The stores are all government owned, and as a result everything is standardized — prices, buying procedures, clerks, etc. Women's clothes were usually shoddy-looking, made of brightly colored, loosely woven cotton or of a very poor grade rayon. These clothes ranged from 24 (\$21.60) to 58 (\$52.20) roubles, and would be comparable to dresses selling at \$4.98 to \$8.98 in the United States.

Chocolate bars, approximately half the size of our nickel bars, cost over one rouble in the U.S.S.R. Prices were unbelievably high for food, clothes, shoes; in fact, most goods in common usage were expensive. However, instruments for engineers, physicians and nurses were less expensive than those same instruments are here in the United States.

To purchase an object in a store, the consumer stands in line and gets

## Why Not Go Native When Landscaping?

It's no longer difficult to find out which native trees and shrubs are good for landscape use in Southern Arizona. When they bloom. How tall they grow.

All you have to do is ask your local county extension office for Bulletin A-29.

The bulletin is entitled "Native Trees and Shrubs for Landscape Use in Southern Arizona." It was written by Joseph S. Folkner, assistant horticulturist at the University of Arizona, and Robert F. Charles Jr., former research associate in horticulture.

The authors point to the growing interest in native trees and shrubs for landscape use.

Native growth, they say, has many advantages over many imported plants. Little supplemental care of native desert species is necessary, and pruning is done only to shape the plant.

"In recent years an increasing interest in native species for landscape use has been expressed in Arizona. An inclusion of native plants will add a phase of southwestern vegetation to the landscape, in addition to reducing water usage," said Folkner.

a slip of paper with the price from the salesgirl, goes to another line to pay the money to a cashier and get a receipt, then back to another line to give the receipt to the salesgirl and to collect the object. The popular joke is that it takes longer for Mrs. Ivan to buy groceries than for Mr. Ivan to orbit around the world a couple of times!

Many impressions flood my mind as I think of the large country and strong people that make up Russia. I remember seeing people line up on the street to put a kopek in the vending machine for a drink of water and then, as they go to the head of the line, having to wait for the person in front to finish with the common glass so they could have a drink. Eating the same menu of black bread, cabbage borsch (soup), and ice cream for over three-fourths of my visit; seeing the women work on the streets, on the railroads, and in construction alongside men; hearing the Intourist guide try honestly to explain the Soviet view of life to U.S. visitors; visiting the anti-religion museum. It is a strange country!

He noted that the soils in which many of the native species grow are similar to those around residential and other urban areas.

"The plants included in this bulletin have been growing in this southwestern climate for hundreds of years under conditions of relatively low water supply. They have become adapted to our desert," Folkner added.

He points out that, in addition to surviving the southwestern climate, these species have resisted insects and diseases for years.

## Then the Rains Came!



Until the wind blew, this Homecoming display at the front entrance of the Aggie Building, home of this college, was quite elaborate.

Ribbons trailing from a map of the world were attached to plants, photos and other symbols of agricultural activity and productivity. This showed how the men, research and products of this college contributed to the agricultural and human welfare of distant parts of the globe.

"But then," said Tony Mellor disconsolately, "the wind began to blow, and a lot of men and products began to circulate around the world in a manner we hadn't planned on."

Tony was concerned, because he was one of the Aggie students who — representing the Agricultural Council of the college — conceived and built the display.

Other members of the committee are Rusty Beck and Tom O'Kane. Their theme, despite a vagrant breeze or two, is still a sound one.