Visitor Learned About Buses, Schools In Moscow

By
GEORGE B. MURPHY Jr.
(Part II of Series

The Moscow City Council is housed in old, beautifully preserved building standing close to the other buildings in the heart of the city.

It's spotless interior, large oil paintings, marble staircase and red carpeting, reflects an earlier style of architecture that prevailed when the building was probably inhabited by a wealthy merchant during the pre-revolutionary period of Russia.

Many government agencies are housed in such buildings throughout the USSR.

We were ushered into a large airy room on the second floor that looked out onto busy Kalinin Street, named after the first president of the Soviet Union.

We seated ourselves at a long polished table, taking note of several trays filled with glasses and bottles of mineral water and dry wines, for our refreshment during the conference. This is a time-honored custom in the Soviet Union.

Following our introduction of the delegates Mayor Vasily Promoslov, speaking perfect English, let us know that he wasp repared to answer any and all questions. We learned a great deal about this famous city and how it is run during our discussions that ran 20 minutes beyond the hour scheduled for the conference.

Moscow, with a population of 7,100,000, covering a land area of 262 square miles, is an important center of industry, science and culture.

The city is surrounded within a radius of 20 to 25 miles, by many rows of trees, part of a planned program, the mayor explained, for helping to filter and cool the air and protect the citizens from the pollution caused by industries, most of which ring the city's outskirts.

This part of the city's environs is called the Greenbelt Area. Here is where pioneer camp and park areas for children are located. Rest homes, nurseries and some sanitoria are also located here. The whole area comprises land twice the size of the city itself.

The mayor reminded us that keeping the air clean is a tremendous responsibility for the City Council in a metropolis with a population larger than that of Denmark.

A master plan for the city's development up to 1985 was approved some months ago, the mayor said, following a lengthy and widespread discussion among all organizations and groups of workers throughout the electorate. Preliminary planning for the year 2000 has already begun, he added. This is in keeping with previous 10-year plans for the development of the city adopted and carried out by the City Council.

The mayor pointed to three elements that assure the success of these plans: first, the plan has a financial and material base; second, the 262 square-mile area boundaries of the city will remain intact; and most important of all, Muscovites are eager to fulfill the plan because it is of, by and for themselves.

The plan calls for an expenditure of three billion rubles a year (The ruble is valued at 1.10 according to current exchange rates).

Top priority will be given to city households, which means that housing construction comes first, then stores, shops and service units.

STROLLING in Moscow's famed Red Square are (L-R) George B. Murphy Jr., leader of visiting delegation from United States; Mrs. Ella Pappademos, her husband, Dr. John Pappademos directly behind; Prof. Robert Rhodes, Mrs. Norma Rogers, in background, Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn Chisley, half hidden; Miss Jane Williams. Other delegates were Miss Alice Childress, Miss Pauline Young and Rodney Sampson, hidden in the crowd. Directly behind the delegation can be seen St. Basil's cathedral. To the left, against the Kremlin Wall, is Lenin's mauseleum.

With 600,000 new apartments having been built during the past five years, the city has now reached a high watermark in apartment construction providing citizens with 120,000 new apartments each year.

"Next year," the mayor said," we will do the same and preserve this tempo in future years.

The task, he explained, is to give every family a separate apartment. There are now 2,100,000 apartments in Moscow. At present the average living space for each person, exclusive of kitchen and bath, is 42.65 square feet. The new aim is to give each person 75.42 square feet of living space, exclusive of kitchen and bath.

This means that every member of a family will have a separate room, plus a large family room, so that for a family of three this would mean a four-room apartment, plus kitchen and bath. Monthly rent is 4 per cent of the income earned by the head of the house, whether man or woman.

Housing construction will be carried out within the present city boundaries. The Moscow City Council is in complete charge of the program, with its various ministries in charge of specific tasks.

The Council exerts a strong influence on the various ministries in charge of building construction, the mayor said. With 200,000 workers involved, he added, "the people demand that we coordinate the activities of all relevant organizations which will be working under the leadership direction of the City Council."

More than 10,000 architects and thousands of engineers have been organized by the City Council for carrying out the plan.

In response to a question, the mayor pointed out that the citizens of Moscow do not pay municipal taxes.

"The land was expropriated in 1917 (the date of the October Revolution) so there is nobody to complain," he said with a smile.

"A big and important question in our plans," he went on, "is the matter of great monumental buildings. In 1917, Lenin, the architect of our great revolution, signed a decree declaring that none of these buildings may be destroyed.

"An example of how this decree is carried out in life, is the City Hall (where we were meeting). Our City Hall was moved on rollers to enable the widening of Gorki Street. We do this sort of thing regularly. It is expensive but history is experience and we must preserve what previous architects have built."

Following a series of questions, the mayor, showing an easy grasp of facts and figures, launched into an explanation of the complex operations of this large metropolis, which affect intimately the daily lives of millions of soviet citizens.

Transportation: The transportation system of Moscow is owned by the City Council. Thirteen million passengers each day are transported on the Metro, buses, trackless trolley buses, street cars and passenger cars which are in short supply.

The Metro, deep underground, with its spotless, beautifully designed stations, fairly high speed escalators, almost noiseless trains carrying no advertising, comfortable seats and running every three seconds during rush hours, with computer safety devices, carries four million passengers daily.

Passengers pay five cents to ride the metro. To ride the buses they pay four cents and to ride the street car they pay three cents.

From other sources, I learned something that we did not have time to investigate when we rode the Metro. There is a wall map at each station showing an alphabetical listing of all the major points of interest in the city. All one has to do is punch a button beside each listed place (provided one reads Russian) and presto, the map lights up showing one the correct subway station to get your train with arrows pointing to the proper direction to take to get there. Subway fares realize 22-million dollars a year, the mayor said.

The metro system covers a distance of 95 miles. One may ride the length and breadth of the city on one fare. In the last 25 years 17 miles of new tracks were laid. During the next five years 22 miles will be added.

During our stay in Moscow we had a chance to observe how the system of paying fares works, when we used a city bus for transportation.

Although there are no conductors, the bus driver does not handle fares, devoting himself entirely to driving the bus. On entering the bus a passenger drops his fare in the box, which is situated to one side near the center of the vehicle, picks up a slip indicating that he has paid, keeps it, and takes his seat.

Occasionally, we were told, an inspector boards the bus, makes a spot check, asking politely, that passengers show their slips, "because there are some folks who 'forget' to pay their fares."

Passengers, such as invalids, pensioners or veterans, traveling on free passes, simply hold up their cards for the passengers to see, and take their seats. Babies and all children up to seven years of age, also ride free.

Dealing with the question of why the Soviet Union does not plan to step up the building of automobiles in the millions instead of the thousands, the mayor indicated here too, the Communist, as in true throughout the country, is proceeding according to a plan that will not allow cars to proliferate and add to problems of air pollution that affects the people.

"Our job is to make sure that public transportation becomes more and more attractive and comfortable for the people," he explained," and this will help solve the problem of too many cars."

And then, stressing the importance of immediate priorities, he added, "first we build apartments for the people, then apartments for cars, after we solve all the acute housing problems."

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Schools: The plan calls for building more school buildings. It was interesting to learn later on our tour of housing projects that schools and recreation facilities for children are the first projects to be built at a new housing site before the apartment buildings go up, so that when the apartments are completed and the families move in, their children have a school to enter and playgrounds to enjoy immediately.

There are one million school children in the Moscow school system, on a one-shift basis. The school day begins at 9 a.m. and ends 2 p.m., when the children are free to enjoy sports and other healthy activities.

Nurseries and kindergartens serve 300,000 children. There are also 600,000 college students in the city many of them training to become engineers.

In the general scheme of things delinquincy is not a problem, the mayor said, "because our students are intimately and fully involved in helping us solve all our problems, there fore we do not have the problem of delinquency."

Before any municipal problem is solved, he pointed out, the city dwellers are consulted through their myriad organizations; and then he gave us examples of how this is accomplished.

"We have many theatres in Moscow," he said, "all are booked, so tickets have to be purchased in advance. We have drawn up a plan for building new theatres in order to solve this problem.

"For thousands of people who visit Moscow every year from all parts of the country, and including thousands of foreign visitors, special preparations have to be made. Here is how it works:

Intourist, the Soviet travel agency, takes care of foreign visitors. For soviet citizens coming from all parts of the country, trade union staff people devise and plan for them before they arrive. Hotels are provided for all tourists because the City Council owns all the hotels in the city.

"We had another problem," the mayor continued, "we have a puppet theatre just for children in our city. First we had a problem of adults taking all the seats, so now we have two puppet theatres; one for children, one for adults. We also have other special theatres for the children. In our adult theatres we also have two matinees for children alone and also on special holidays."

TO BE CONTINUED

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(George B. Murphy Jr., author of this series, based largely on a tour he made with a citizens' group in 1971, is a long-time AFRO employee who has taken a keen interest in world affairs. His articles take on new perspective in the wake of President Nixon's recent trip, providing an insight into life in the Soviet Union not otherwise available to AFRO readers. The observations, views and conclusions contained in the articles are those of the author.)

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Summer recreation available in city

Lots of summer activities have been planned for youngsters, oldsters and those who just like to watch by the Baltimore Bureau of Recreation.

Some of the activities have already started but many more are yet to come including this hot lineup for June:

The Senior Municipal Games Track will be held at Northwestern High School, 11 a.m. on the 17th.

From June 23 to 30 the 45rd tennis tournament will be held at Clifton Park, starting at 10 a.m. daily.

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Several activities are set for June 26. The summer-playground programs will begin at 10 a.m. that day portable pools will open at 10 a.m.

Also learn-to-swim programs begin at Cherry Hill Pool, Druid Hill Park Pool, Patterson Park Pool and Riverside Park Pool from 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

The first round of BNBL league play will be held June 20 to 27.

U. S. Youth Games Track and Field try-outs will be held at Easterwood Park, June 23 at 1 p.m.

The Dundalk Invitational Slow Pitch Softball Tiurnament at Gray Charlesmont will be June 26 to 30 at 6 p.m.

And the opening camp variety will be June 28 at Fort Smallwood Park.

Cable TV workshop set for June 10

Referring to a Saturday, June 10 community workshop that will focus on the service potential of cable televisiln, James Workman, executive director of the Baltimore Urban Coalition, co-sponsor of the workshop, said:

"Citizens have a great stake in cable development; especially in the scope and content of the public franchise which will govern its operation.

"Unfortunately, the public has very little informatiln about CATV, and is ill-prepared to participate effectively in the public hearings which will shape the franchise ordinance."

The Department of Media and Social Research of Antioch College is the other co-sponsor of the workshop planned for Lake Clifton High School from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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The State of Things

By VAL HYMES

Governor Marvin Mandel not only manipulated the Democratic State convention Friday like a master puppeteer, but had a hand as well in the rebel coup at the Republican convention the next day.

It was Mandel's involvement in Republican Party affairs during last winter's legislative session that sowed some of the seeds of discontent leading to the defiance of the elected delegates to party leaders. Warned that they would be holding an "illegal" meeting, they went ahead anyway to pick the rest of the delegation without the party heads present.

The Democratic delegates weren't so lucky. Their would-be rebellion against the party establishment was quashed even before the convention opened.

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Early this winter, GOP State Chairman Alexander M. Lankier, with U. S. Sens. J. Glenn Beall Jr. and Charles McC. Mathias, visited Mandel to ask his help on a bill to let the public elect two rather than three delegates from each district.

This would give party leaders a better chance to control the delegation through the tradition of giving the remaining at-large seats (10 rather than 2) to party title-holders.

Two GOP senators in Annapolis sponsored the national party-ordered bill but charged GOP leaders with bypassing the legislature. And it passed anyway in the Democratic-controlled Assembly.

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So it was a surprise to some that 14 of the 18 elected delegates would refuse to give "a free ride to Miami," as one dissident said, to party leaders who had been Rockefeller supporters in 1968, in a fight between conservatives and liberals.

The GOP battle was between suburban versus "rank and file" Republicans as well, and Mandel's involvement was only perfunctory last winter, but one has the uneasy feeling that the chairman of the national Democratic governors' caucus will somehow exact his pound of flesh someday, somewhere.

And it has been pointed out that a split in the Republican party here, although insignificant nationally, could bolster the strength of the usually split Democratic Party in Maryland.

It was also interesting note that both GOP and Democratic delegates rebelled against the Montgomery County political establishment, and compromised.

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The Republican rebels challenged the handling of finances by a fundraisers' group named by Montgomery County's Lenkler, but accepted a diplomatic resolution commending the job done while insisting on party scrutiny. A public audit had been threatened.

And the Democrats found themselves agreeing to a plan to let an avowed Humphrey supporter, Lt. Gov. Blair Lee have one of the five choice at-large seats, representing Montgomery County, which went for McGovern.

In return, another one of the seats went to McGovern coordinator Joseph Raymond, who lives in Humphrey territory.

Mandel's control at the Democratic convention was so blatant that one nominee for an at-large seat called the delegates "monkeys on a string following lists and trading votes."

He sat on the platform and sent his press officer with messages to the McGovern forces as independent party members tried in vain to break through the impenetrable Mandel-McGovern bloc.

He ran the show with a nod of the head and a crook of the finger to the amusement of reporters and the chagrin of blacks, liberals, women and conservatives.

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Several challenges will be filed as a result, partly because of the malapportionment by district, the shortage of blacks, women and young people (also evident on the GOP side), and because motions were ignored and the committmen were chosen by central committees elected in 1970 under old party rules.

Governor Mandel is confident the delegation is not only "balanced" but will stand up to a challenge because the delegates themselves were "popularly elected." And he insists he did not control the vote, although he admits meeting with McGovern forces to talk about "harmony" at the convention.

Although at both conventions the selection of the at-large delegates dominated the center ring, the selection of the alternates — who will have floor privileges — involved more at-home style politics.

These are the tickets to Miami, the road to a seat on a convention committee without election, a step up the party ladder.

James Scott, Ray Clark and Anne Pickett from Baltimore's 7th District were elected, according to preliminary lists available at the Democratic Convention. John Fulton was named a Republican alternate from that district, Carol Jeffries from Baltimore was elected an at-large alternate of the Democrats. She is not only black, but is also a woman, and under 30.

Now the convention committees — rules, credentials and platform — will meet, (and the Democrats' platform committee plans to traverse the State,) to get ready for the big show.

The Republican renegades, by the way, who named Dr. Aris T. Allen, the only black Republican in the General Assembly, as delegation chairman, scheduled their show-down meeting with party heads Monday in Annapolis.

So the national conventions begin to take on some local flavor as party reform tests the mettle of the loyal workers patiently waiting their turns under the old system. It still looks like politics Maryland style in Democratic country and there may be more of the same — Maryland style — in Republican and than they will admit.

But it was worth the price of admission.

Servicemen in the News

Navy Seaman Recruit Luther E. Starks, son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Starks of Stonewood Rd., graduated from recruit training at the Naval Training Center in Great Lakes.

A 1970 graduate of Forest Park High School, he attended DeVry Technical College, Union, N.J.

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Navy Seaman Recruit Anthony A. Parran, son of Mrs. Sylvia A. Parran of Baker St., graduated from recruit training at the Naval Training Center in Great Lakes.

He is a graduate of Forrest Park High School.

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Navy Seaman Recruit Carroll E. Webb, son of Mrs. Nova H. Joyner of 5425 The Alameda, graduated from recruit training at the Naval Training Center in Great Lakes.

He is a 1972 graduate of Mergenthaler High.

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Marine Pvt. Michael B. Haines, son of Mr. Benjamin H. Haines of W. North Ave., graduated from basic training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island, S.C.

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Marine Pvt. John E. Clark, son of Mrs. Charlotte L. Hardy of Light St., graduated from basic training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island, S.C.

He is a former student of Francis Scott Key High School.

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Marine Pvt. Dale T. Ryles, son of Mrs. Lelia B. Ryles of N. Patterson Park Ave., graduated from basic training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island, S.C.

He is a 1971 graduate of Douglars High School.

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Marine Pvt. Woodrow Peterson, son of Mrs. Alice Peterson of Holbrook St., Baltimore, Md., graduated from basic training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island, S.C.

He is a 1969 graduate of Carver High School.

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Marine Cpl. John C. Wright, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry C. Wright of Woodlawn Drive, was awarded a Meritorious Mast while serving at Marine Barracks, U.S. Naval Base, Philippines.

A Meritorious Mast is a personal commendation from his commanding officer.

A 1964 graduate of Woodlawn High School, he entered the Marine Corps in April, 1969.

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Marine Pvt. Leonard A. Johnson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harly Johnson of N. Monroe St., graduated from basic training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island, S.C.

He is a 1971 graduate of Frederick Douglass Senior High.

Marine Gunnery Sergeant Cornelius N. Dorsey, son of Mrs. Olga N. Dorsey of 5002 Norwood Ave., took part in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's operation "Dawn Patrol" aboard the aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy in the Mediterranean.

The exercise involved our Sixth Fleet and the navies of eight other NATO nations, and was designed to strengthen allied coordination during combined forces operations.

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Navy Firmen Apprentice Robert C. Walters, son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl W. Walters of Gwynn Oak Ave., completed basic Machinists Mate School at Great Lakes, Ill.

Machinists Mates maintain shipboard engines and related equipment, hoists, elevators as well as food preparation, laundry and refrigeration equipment.

He is a 1971 graduate of Woodlawn Sr. High School in Baltimore.

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Navy Seaman Recruit Luther D. Miller, husband of the former Miss Leslie L. O'Neal of 12 N. Patterson Park Ave., Baltimore, graduated from recruit training at the Naval Training Center in Great Lakes.

He is a former student of Hampstead Hill High School, Baltimore.

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Navy Seaman Recruit Vandelendo M. Poulson, son of Mr. and Mrs. O. V. Poulson of Poplar Grove St., Baltimore, graduated from recruit training at the Naval Training Center in Great Lakes.

He is a former student of Baltimore City College, Baltimore.

Marine Cpl. Michael L. Hinton, of N. Dukeland St., Baltimore, is off the North Carolina coast aboard the aircraft carrier USS America, participating in "Exotic Dancer Five," a multi-service amphibious training operation involving about 50,000 men of the Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, Army and Air Force.

Wallace Beal Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Beal Sr., N. Dallas St., has been promoted to sergeant in the U.S. Air Force.

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Sergeant in U.S. Air Force

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