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USSR and Amerika

One aspect of the cultural exchange between the Soviet Union and the United States that has attracted little notice is the production of monthly magazines by each country for distribution in the other. The magazines, *USSR* and *Amerika*, are both richly illustrated slick-paper magazines of generous and attractive format. What does each country think it important to tell the other? How are the magazines alike? How do they differ?

The magazines resemble each other in that they both devote much space to articles about medical care, schools and teachers, art museums, artists, the ballet, symphony orchestras, the theatre, sports, fashions, family life, vacations, and vacation resorts. Judging by the pictures, the people in both countries are healthy and happy, at work and at play.

But in emphasis and attitudes in some fields the magazines differ sharply. *USSR* is obviously written for the American audience; unfortunately, so is much of *Amerika*. Aside from two articles about the production of *War and Peace* as a movie and as a television show, none of the articles in *Amerika* is specifically directed to a Russian audience, although special articles about the fall of parity and the functions of Congress and of the Supreme Court are surely informative to that audience.

For the most part, *Amerika* depends upon reprinted material—that is, material originally written for an American audience and published in books or such magazines as *Life*, *Look*, *McCall's*, *The Lamp*, *Friends*, and so on. Of the 125 articles in the last seven issues of *Amerika*, 77, or more than 60 percent, are reprints. Many of these are of good quality and present an adequate picture of some aspect of American life. What they lack for the present purpose is the background that most Americans—but few Russians—would be expected to know. The Russians on the other hand take pains to sketch in the background; they take nothing for granted. The Russians describe their air transport network and their large, fast, new planes; the Americans reprint an article about America's little airlines, some of which are still flying DC-3's. *USSR* describes how deserts are made to bloom under irrigation; how hydroelectric power is increasing and how it is fed into a national grid; and how tractors and other mechanical aids help the farmer. *Amerika* has little that is comparable in scope.

The remedy is clear. *Amerika* should become less dependent on reprints and should commission articles that give comprehensive pictures of some of our accomplishments. We suggest articles on the Grand Coulee Dam, the TVA, wheat farming, agricultural research, the oil industry, automation and the machine tool industry, great industrial cities, the U.S. contribution to antibiotics, nuclear reactors, research accomplishments in optical and radio astronomy, the invention of the transistor, synthetic diamonds, America and the IGY, biographical sketches of noted American scientists, the National Science Foundation and basic research, foreign students in the United States, and the American Pavilion at Brussels.

The United States has a great and exciting story to tell; it is up to *Amerika* to tell it.—G.DuS.

