# Nation's Business

GENERAL MAGAZINE FOR BUSINESSMEN

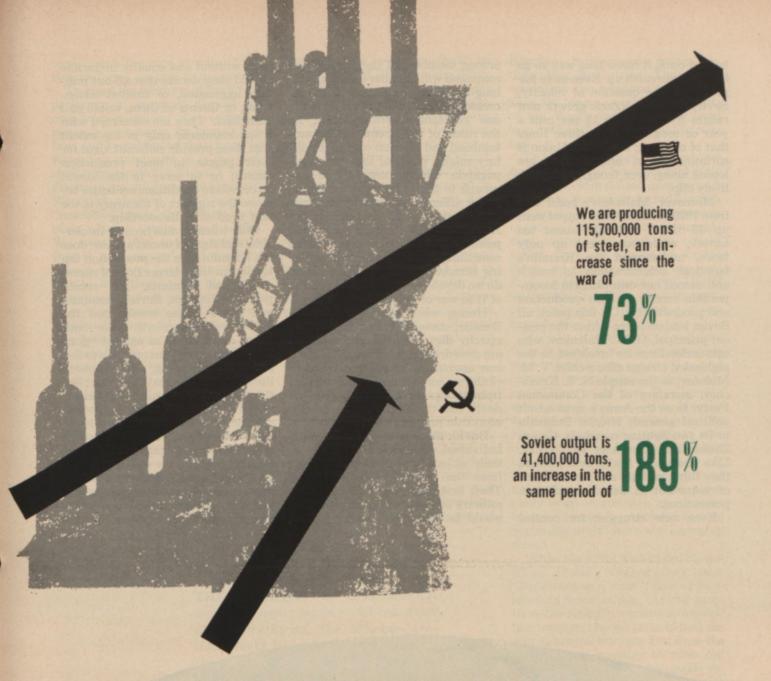
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## RUSSIA'S GAINING ON US

In rate of industrial production and economic expansion, the Russians sprint while we lope along

By HERBERT HARRIS

THE growth of economic power in the Soviet Union is outpacing that of every other country. If present trends continue, Soviet production—as measured by such basics as coal, steel, electric energy, machine tools—will, by 1960, surpass the combined total of Britain, France, West Germany, the Lowlands and Italy. These nations, taken together, have a population of 208,000,000, or almost exactly the same as that of the USSR.

Supporting this prediction are such facts as:

The 189 per cent rise in Soviet steel output, over the past seven years against 73 per cent for the U.S.

The more vigorous Soviet recovery from war's devastations as against U. S. aided western Europe.

The findings of recent economic research which show that prospects for further Soviet economic growth are excellent.

To put the magnitude of Russia's industrial advance in perspective, we can look back 40 years to 1913. Then factory output in Britain alone was 4.5 times higher than in the Russia

of the tsars. Looking ahead for the same period, we find that our own present ratio of a 4.5-to-one productive superiority over the USSR is no cause for complacency.

The reality is that the rate of economic expansion in the Soviet Union is far more rapid than ours, on a relative basis. From 1948-1952, for example, its production rose some 17 per cent a year, and ours 4.3 per cent. To be sure, this disparity is in part explained by the Soviet Union's postwar reconstruction spurt and by the fact that, beginning at a base line far

behind ours, it has a long way to go before it can catch up. Even more important is the question of velocity; Soviet rate of economic growth now ranges from eight to 12 per cent a year or roughly two to three times that of our own; the Soviet Union is sprinting and in comparison we are loping along, even though at a good, lively clip.

Moreover, Malenkov's boast that from 1929 to 1951 Soviet output went up 13 times (actually about ten times), while ours went up only twice, underscored the Kremlin's fanatical determination to match and exceed our own hitherto incomparable record in both production and productivity. On this point, all Soviet leaders agree—from the present principal, G. M. Malenkov, who eats carloadings for breakfast, to the pigheaded foreign affairs chief, V. M. Molotov, to the supple N. S. Krushchev, secretary of the Communist Party; from the Army's most adroit political general, Nicolai Bulganin to its two fighting marshals, Georgi Zhukov and Alexander Vasilievksy. Like Lenin and Stalin before them, they think and act not just in terms of years but in decades and even generations.

Even new struggles for control

among members of the Soviet high command will not alter essentially its long-term preoccupation with increases in economic power. It is the one "constant" in Soviet policy. To the rulers of the Kremlin it is fountainhead and fulcrum of Soviet military might, political influence, propaganda effectiveness. Their approach to the purposes of economic power differs so profoundly from our own that it still confuses many Americans. We regard economic power almost by reflex action, as something to be used for raising living standards; only as a last resort do we devote any substantial portion of it to war or defense.

Hence, when we learn that the Russian masses have an inadequate starchy diet of bread and potatoes, are crowded ten to a room in a Moscow apartment house, wear shoddy clothing, and shoes often plaited from thongs of hemp, we tend to doubt that the USSR has made any economic progress at all.

But for the masters of the Kremlin individual well-being is the least of their objectives. Theirs has been from the outset a war economy. Their first resort has been to build military strength to a point where it would be invincible against attack from without and equally invincible should they decide that all-out military aggression, or limited adventures, or threats of them, would suit them best. They are concerned with living standards only to the extent that these provide sufficient vigor for their people to meet production quotas; or to serve in the armed forces where conditions are better because the support of the army is the first need of a dictatorship.

Only when strains become intolerable, and signs of unrest appear, does the Kremlin turn the production tap to allow a little larger flow of necessaries and comforts. Its recent promise that the Soviet consumer will get a better break, that the USSR will henceforth have both "guns and butter" as against "guns instead of butter" can mean up to five per cent for housing, meat, apparel. lipsticks over the next two years; but this "upsurge of popular well-being" may be halted as soon as protests subside. In the case of the less docile and "disciplined" satellites, where riots, slowdowns, and other revolts against Soviet rule recently flared up, from East Berlin to Bucharest. the Kremlin not only orders out tanks, it also increases food allotments, reduces "norms" in the fac-



tory, arrests the pace of collectivization on farms, as sops to discontent.

To grasp the meaning of the Soviet performance, we must discard our own preconceptions that economic power is a synonym for human welfare, and keep in mind that, from the Kremlin's standpoint, it is the decisive instrumentality through which Communism can dominate mankind. We must also rid ourselves of an "emotional block" that afflicts many of us when it comes to the USSR. We seem to feel that to recognize that it has accomplished anything remarkable is to lend aid and comfort to the enemy. Yet to despise Communism does not absolve us from the responsibility of looking, without blinkers, at what has actually been happening.

Contrary to popular belief, the Soviet push to transform the semi-feudal economy of the tsars into a highly industrialized society did not really get under way with the Bolshevik coup d'etat in 1917. The genuine starting point was ten years later; thus Soviet economic growth has been achieved in 25, not 36, years. It took Lenin's government a decade to restore to 1913 levels all facets of production which had been destroyed and disrupted by World

War I; by the revolution itself; by the Civil War of 1918-20 when White Russian armies, assisted by troops and supplies from the United States, Britain, France, Japan, failed to defeat Trotsky's new Red battalions and overthrow the Bolshevik regime; and by the "little war" with Poland.

It was not until early in 1928 that the economy was stable enough to permit launching of the first Five Year Plan. Like its successors, its overriding aim was to hurry, irrespective of human cost, the build-up of a heavy industry that could feed the Soviet war machine and lead to a strong, self-sufficient economy. At the time, the Kremlin was particularly obsessed by fears of "capitalist encirclement," induced by Marxist logic and by the intervention of World War I victors on the side of the anti-Bolshevik forces.

It was eager to telescope into a few years the development of a modern industry which, in the West, had resulted from organic accruals over a century and a half. Lacking enough engineers and other technicians, it hired American, German, British, French and other experts to design and superintend construction of steel works at Magnitogorsk, machine building at Sverdlovsk, tractors at

Kharkov, hydroelectric power stations along the Dnieper. The foreign specialists also imparted to the Russians the long accumulated precepts of the West's industrial lore from iron ore beneficiation to quality control.

To insure supply of fuels and raw materials, Soviet teams of geologists and prospectors ranged over the vast land mass, turning up incredibly rich and previously unexplored resources of coal, oil, iron ore, chrome, manganese, copper, zinc, lead, tin, cobalt, nickel, the whole catalog. A decade before we embarked upon our synthetic rubber program, the USSR was producing it in quantity with potato alcohol or limestone as key ingredients.

Since the Kremlin lacked sufficient labor to fulfill its ambitions, peasants were recruited by the million and crowded into industrial centers. Only one of three could read; the illiterate were taught to spell with Marxist maxims and factory work sheets. The Kremlin wanted the peasants who remained on the land to pool plots into collective farms (Kolkhozi). It thought that such larger agricultural units would be more efficient, especially when served on a group basis by tractors and harvesters that were beginning to roll from new assembly lines

When the more well-to-do, the socalled Kulaks, balked they were "liquidated as a class": shot or banished to labor camps. At the same time, the Kremlin wanted to requisition sausage, cheese, grain to feed the new industrial workers. But since the Kremlin was investing 83 cents out of every dollar in capital goods industry and 17 cents in consumer goods industry, it could offer the peasants only inflated rubles instead of the tea, textiles, apparel and hardware for which they would have been willing to exchange their meat, dairy and grain products. They spurned the government paper, hid their wheat, slaughtered their livestock. They were slaughtered in turn, and cowed into submission. The resulting famine caused 4,000,000 people to starve to death within 26 months. But the dams and mills and plants had been going up. Many of them were operating with considerable efficiency, marred by fitful purges (1936-38) of managers and techni-

From 1928 to 1940, or from the first to the middle of the third Five Year Plan, the Russian people, driven and deprived, were as badly fed, clad, shod, sheltered as in the worst days of tsardom. Yet the Kremlin could note that the industrial labor force had been trans-

(Continued on page 74)

THE KREMLIN has developed five major economic regions that can stand alone—Leningrad, the Moscow-Iaroslovl-Gorki triangle, eastern Ukraine, Urals, and western Siberia. Emphasis was on making each self-supporting in all respects possible, military, industrial, agricultural. If one region should be sealed off by enemy attack, others can fight on.



### Russia's Gaining on Us

(Continued from page 27) formed from a largely unschooled, untrained mob of 10,000,000 into an "educated," moderately competent proletariat of 30,000,000 while collectives had become the vogue on 96 per cent of all farms. Above all, the crucial aim was being reached. Industrial production in June of 1941 was some 925 per cent above its 1928 mark. Stalin was hinting at a lift in living standards when the Nazis struck.

Hitler's legions were, in large measure, hurled back by Russia's three great generals: Winter, Mud and Space; by the courage of its defenders; by \$13,000,000,000 in lend-lease aid from the U.S., Britain, Canada. All these were important, but perhaps even more important was something else: the ability of Soviet industry, located east of Moscow (industry in the western area had been destroyed by the invasion, except for 1,300 plants evacuated toward the Urals), to turn out in the last three years of the war an annual average of 40,000 planes; 30,000 tanks and armored vehicles; 120,000 artillery pieces; 450,000 light and heavy machine guns; 200,000 submachine guns; 3,000,000 rifles; 240,000,000 shells and bombs; and 7,500,000,000 cartridges.

"Production wins wars," said Stalin.

However, the Nazi onslaught had inflicted massive destruction upon the Soviet economy. More than 7,-000,000 combatants perished, and 38,000,000 civilians were left homeless. Property damage totaled \$128,-000,000,000 (as calculated in U.S. 1939 prices) or two thirds of the total wealth in the territory conquered and occupied by the Wehrmacht. Laid waste by artillery fire, bombs, or demolition charges were 31,000 factories, mines and electric power installations; 40,000 miles of railroad track; 13,000 bridges; 6,000,-000 buildings in 1,700 cities and 70,000 villages. Livestock losses were 7,000,000 out of 11,600,000 horses: 17,000,000 out of 31,000,000 cattle; 20,000,000 out of 23,600,000 hogs; and 27,000,000 out of 43,000,000 sheep and goats.

Soviet recovery from war's devastations has been even swifter and more astonishing than that of western Europe under the Marshall Plan. This comeback has been quickened by plundering, under the guise of "reparations," some \$2,000,000,000 in industrial equipment from East Germany, and by using the Japanese

occupation of Manchuria during World War II as excuse for looting \$1,600,000,000 in electric generators, transformers, motors, everything else portable. Then, too, the satellites have had to yield to the USSR whatever it demands in supplies and machinery such as bauxite from Hungary and turret lathes from the former Skoda works in Czechoslovakia.

Currently, the Kremlin has set its economic sights higher than ever under the fifth Five Year Plan (1951-55, inclusive). It intends to raise steel output 62 per cent over 1950; coal 43 per cent; electric power 80 per cent; oil 85 per cent; tin 80 per cent; big metal cutting machine tools 260 per cent; railroad trackage 50 per cent; cement 220 per cent; mineral fertilizers 88 per cent. It has told consumers that their real pur-



chasing power will go up by 35 per cent and that, typically, they will have available 70 per cent more cotton, wool, silk and linen fabrics; 90 per cent more meat; 50 per cent more leather footwear; 240 per cent more kitchen utensils and sewing machines and 50 per cent more "community construction": new dwelling units, water mains, heating, municipal transport.

These are extraordinarily ambitious goals, even for the Kremlin. Can they be met? Until recently we had few clues to a reliable answer to this or similar questions. However, the patient detective work of the West's economic scholars, most of it reaching full fruition over the past 30 months, enables us to transpose the distortions of Soviet statistics into reasonably accurate estimates of future trend lines, as well as having provided us with a scale of revised reckonings for computing the real

On the basis of such findings, together with surveys and reports from other authoritative sources, it looks as if Kremlin prospects for fulfilling its 1955 quotas are excellent for heavy industry and fuels, good for most metal mining, good for trans-

rate of Soviet economic growth dur-

ing the past quarter of a century.

port, poor to fair for light industry, and poor for agriculture.

This forecast, in broad contours, is sustained by a brief audit of past performance by key indicators of Soviet economic power.

Twenty-five years ago, for example, Soviet annual steel production stood at 4,500,000 net tons, rising to 20,050,000 in 1940. It is about 41,400,000 today with a target of 44,-200,000 for 1955, when estimated U. S. production will be about 123,-400,000. Although our own steel production has been stretched some 73 per cent within the past seven years (see page 30), the corresponding gain in the USSR is about 189 per cent within the same interval. Improvements in the quality of alloys have made it possible for the Soviet's machine - building industry, from grinder to gear cutter, to increase four times faster than any other branch of Soviet economy, and to diversify its forms as it kept swelling in size. In 1928, for example, the industry was making 1,800 machine tools a year, but only 100 different types; in 1940, 65,000 with 500 types; today a probable 125,000 of 2,600 types, with a target of 260,000 with perhaps 3,000 types for 1955. In this connection, the differences between American and Soviet definitions as to what a machine tool really is make comparisons difficult especially since Soviet statisticians sometimes include small portable gadgets in their data. With this qualification in mind, our production of machine tools for 1955 is estimated to be about the same as in 1952, or some 97,000.

The "machines that make machines" have first claim upon Soviet steel, illuminating the axiom that the way a country allocates its steel can often be as significant as the amount it produces - especially when it comes to military effectiveness. Hitler entered World War II with only 22,700,000 tons a year, and Japan with 6,900,000. Our armaments are absorbing 14 per cent of our steel. while in the USSR they have been taking more than 30 per cent since 1938. This helps to explain why the Soviet Union has been able to equip with modern weapons an army of 3,100,000; why it is capable of supplying to the 800,000 members of its air force 22,000 modern planes a year, including 5,400 jets of the MIG type: why its four-sea fleet, manned by 600,000 sailors, with their new speedy battleships, cruisers, destroyers, snorkels, has replaced Britain as the world's second most powerful navy.

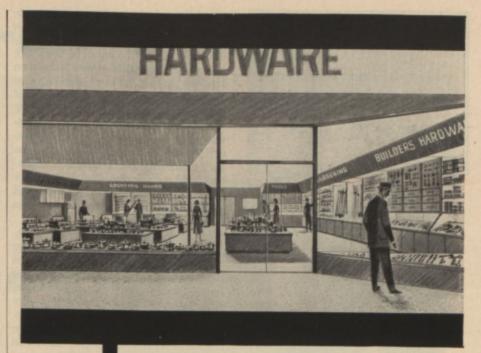
Moreover, the steel plant is increasingly the hub into which are filled the spokes of other industries from chemicals to electronics to combines. This reflects the Kremlin's recent emphasis upon developing five major economic regions (Leningrad; Moscow - Iaroslovl - Gorki triangle; eastern Ukraine; Urals; western Siberia) that can be made as selfsupporting as possible in all respects, military, industrial, agricultural. If one region should be sealed off or obliterated by enemy attack, the others can fight on as self-contained units, with their own armed forces, their own stockpiles of munitions and materials, their own plants (some underground), their own coal and electric power, and food from surrounding sectors.

The advantages of economic regionalism are especially great in a country where the expanse of 8,500,-000 square miles  $(2\frac{1}{2})$  times the size of our land area) makes long hauls a costly part of production over-head. The Kremlin is trying to fashion a "transport axis" inside each major region, with radials linking them with each other. It is insisting that some 25,000 kilometers of new track be laid before the end of the present Five Year Plan. At first glance this would seem impossible. Yet it should be recalled that the Soviet Union's 3,000,000 railroad employes are under martial law to "do or die"; more steel is available than ever before; labor productivity on the railroads is certainly no less than the national average which, using 1928 as 100, is now around 490; and that even in the midst of World War II, some 11,000 kilometers of new track was built, bringing the present total up to some 125,000 kilometers, with 150,000 the target for 1955 (U. S. estimate: 357,300 kilometers).

In any event the Kremlin appears jubilant over the outlook for railroads. It is likewise confident about (a) coal, where production has been lifted from 39,050,000 net tons in 1928 to some 330,000,000 today, with 409,000,000 scheduled for 1955 (U. S. estimate: 552,000,000 tons): (b) oil, where the figures are 12,100,-000 tons in 1928 and 52,800,000 currently with 76,890,000 for 1955 (U. S. estimate: 317,000,000 tons); (c) electric power, up from 5,000,-000,000 kilowatt hours in 1928 to 133,000,000,000 currently and 162,-000,000,000 in 1955 (U. S. estimate: 448,000,000,000 kw-h).

Comparable advances have been scored in nonferrous metals. The Soviet aluminum industry, virtually nonexistent 25 years ago, is now turning out 220,000 tons a year, with 286,000 set for 1955 (U.S. estimate: 1,800,000 tons)

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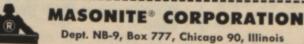
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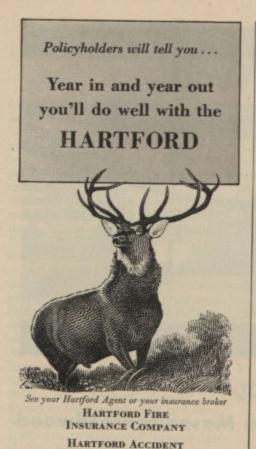
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all of these targets. Soviet heavy industry is being penalized by its earlier improvident use of the richest, nearest formations of iron ore and graphite, and the need to rely on inferior grades; by such shortages as that in sulphuric acid; by the lack of coordination within and between industries which stems from the attempt of economic planners to prescribe too many details; from the lack of managerial creativity, initiative, and willingness to risk, together with the anxiety over talebearers and spies, which are inseparable from totalitarian society.

On the other hand, the very ruthlessness with which drives to enlarge production are pursued should not be underestimated. Nor should the fact that, in education, knowledge, training, the Soviet people are very different from what they were a generation ago. The number of scientific institutes and laboratories has risen from 1,540 in 1940 to 2,900 today; some 57,000,000 pupils are attending schools and universities; in Gorki region alone, there are 62 technical colleges with an enrolment of 47,000 students. The son of yesterday's muzhik, with his medieval mind, may be today's atomic physicist. While in research Communism's brain-warping dogmas strangle the spirit of free inquiry, the adaptation of the West's discoveries to Soviet

Since Soviet heavy industry has first call on executive talent, materials, manpower and investment funds, light industry remains the Orphan Annie and can deliver only to a partial extent on Kremlin pledges to amplify consumer goods. To be sure, light industry is geared to turn out considerably more paring knives and pots and pans and even some token home refrigerators and vacuum cleaners than in preceding years. But it is otherwise up against this dilemma: the peasants still hanker after factory shoes and clothing which are fabricated from hides, fleece, cotton. However, since the shoes and clothing are not already forthcoming the peasants haven't the incentives to provide enough raw materials out of which they can be made.

problems goes on apace.

To correct this condition, the Kremlin recently promised to cut in half the taxes of the peasants, and let them earn extra profits from the sale of products raised on their individual plots of land.

On the food front, the USSR is suffering retribution for putting too much effort into mechanizing and collectivizing the farms while neglecting the land itself. It has been thriftless about crop rotation and soil depletion, even though latterly it

has been rushing to make up for such oversights by raising the production of phosphates and other fertilizers, and by building irrigation systems and shelter belts against erosion. Then, too, some 7,000,000 people have been transferred from agriculture to industry since 1946; and Soviet population continues to increase by 3,000,000 a year. To date, livestock renewals have not made up for the frightful extermination of the war. As a result, the national diet by 1955 will be improved, if at all, only to a meager extent. Similarly, the construction of new dwelling units will suffice more to keep alive the hope for better quarters, someday, than to meet exigent needs.

Nor can the distribution of Soviet national income be expected to change from its present pattern under which the three per cent of party hierarchs, the upper echelons of government, technicians, journalists, scientists, industrial executives receive from \$5,000 to \$20,000 a year; the seven per cent of the middle and lower echelons of the bureaucracy from \$700 to \$3,000; the 41 per cent of the workers \$425; the 39 per cent of the peasants \$225; and the ten per cent of slave labor what it costs to keep them alive.

Nevertheless, outside the U. S., Canada, Australasia, and most of non-Communist Europe, Soviet per capita income on the average compares favorably with that elsewhere around the globe, a point too often forgotten. It is nearly half that of Britain, three quarters that of



France, and on a par with Japan and Argentina, and above Italy. It is from ten to 12 times higher than in India, Pakistan, China, Indo-China, Indonesia and the Arab States.

Meantime, as Soviet economic power keeps rising, the question of what is going to be done with it stares at the West and all who cherish freedom.

Some believe that the Kremlin will eventually devote its new wealth to conferring upon the populace the Biblical "feast of fat things." However it would seem more likely that the Russian people will be kept on minimum rations needed for internal stability as long as the Kremlin thinks it can use an extra bolt or bushel to advance its strategy of making Communism prevail

throughout the world. Any shift from this course could occur only if a patriotic nationalist movement should triumph and depose the "more Communist than Russian" faction that has been in the saddle.

Presumably, such patriot-nationalists would invoke economic power to bring prosperity at home and win trust and cooperation abroad. Barring this eventuality, Russia's economic expansion must be watched. This does not mean that the Kremlin will consciously precipitate a third world war, although this possibility can never be ruled out entirely. It means rather that it will command its economic power to wage war by other means, at less expense.

Already in still free Asia, as well as in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, Soviet propagandists are pointing to the USSR's accomplishments in production as proof that the way to abundance is to embrace Communism; this appeal is potent in places where industrialization is idolized as the new magic force that wipes out poverty and ushers in the brave new world, tomorrow morning. Since to the Kremlin, production is a political rather than an economic process, it can sell at cut rates both commodities and equipment to peoples in the underdeveloped areas as a method of drawing them into the communist orbit. It can use its surpluses for dumping goods and depressing prices to damage the free world's markets, especially since it looks upon trade as a weapon in the cold war. The Kremlin can devise its own versions of the Marshall Plan and Point IV and turn against us and the West in general the very turbines, tractors and T-squares it has borrowed from the enterprise and inventiveness of the Atlantic community. Significantly, the Kremlin last July for the first time offered to contribute to the UN'S technical assistance program to the tune of a million rubles.

If the free world is not to be undermined by the growth of Soviet economic power, western Europe must invest more psychic energy into selfpreservation. In keeping ahead, or even, with the USSR's industrial advances, western Europe's problem has less to do with resources than with the gumption to survive, the will to work and to break out of traditional molds. In our own country the problem is even less that of resources, nor is it lack of vitality or faith in ourselves and our future. It is a problem of public awareness which is the indispensable preface to measures that can enable us to maintain our lead and deal successfully with all the implications of the Soviet END speed-up for supremacy.

