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A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

By Mervyn Matthews

University of Surrey, Guildford

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Home is where the Soviet worker, in common with the toiling folk of most industrialised lands, spends the greater part of his life, waking and sleeping. Clearly our treatment of so broad a topic must be restricted. We have in fact chosen for discussion four major topics - housing, the burden of domestic chores, diet, and some uses of leisure time - which are among the main elements in the Soviet worker's life outside the factory gates.

Given the immense difficulties of obtaining data about Soviet life styles, our exposition must be illustrative rather than definitive. Some of it will refer to townspeople, rather than workers as such, because the narrower category is not always investigable. We shall endeavour where possible to determine the extent to which living space, household goods, etc. have been acquired, and outline trends and government policies. Some domestic activities are best measured through time budgets (a yardstick unduly neglected by many observers), and we shall use these when practicable. Comparisons between Soviet and American patterns will be attempted so as to deepen the perspective.

Workers' Housing and Household Amenities

Soviet housing has many facets. Here we shall try to interpret

such data as we have on space and type of accommodation so as to provide a realistic appraisal of the levels achieved for Soviet workers.*

As far as space is concerned we shall use some restricted data on the town of Novosibirsk, the figures which appear in the annual statistical handbooks, a few figures relating to Armenia in the mid-sixties, and some incidental information from a large Ukrainian migration study. The Novosibirsk study is the best starting point, if only because it is the most detailed.

According to data in Narodnoe khozvaistvo, 1966 the average per capita level of living space in Novosibirsk in January, 1966 was dismally low, at something like 6.8 sq. metres per inhabitant, while the room occupation rate was high, (table 1). The space occupied by a large body of Novosibirsk workers was revealed more precisely by a remarkable study conducted in five local enterprises in 1965-1966, and published in a small edition later.** The 1,674 respondents were both men and women workers

* Although a few pages of the Soviet annual statistical handbooks are devoted to housing, most information on this topic, including the results of periodic housing surveys, is secret. Some figures are made available to officials in volumes with a limited circulation, such as the 'Gosudarstvennoe zhilischchnoe i kulturno-bytovoe stroitelstvo, Ezhegodnye statisticheskie sborniki (dlya sluzhebnoho ispolzovania)', Rotaprint TsNIIEP zhilischcha, M. 1962-1967, vyp. 1-6, possibly continuous since then. The contrast with the American practice of publishing whole shelves of statistics on this topic is most striking.

** Otnoshenie k trudu i tekuchest kadrov, by E.G. Antosenkov and V.A. Kalmyk (eds) Novosibirsk, 1970, (500 copies).

Table 1.

Novosibirsk Housing Data - General

	1966	1975
Population	1,049,000	1,265,000
'Useful' space	9,903	15,243
'Living' space	7,130*	10,970*
Per capita living space	6.8*	8.7*
% Increase per cap. living space	-	28%*
No. of rooms	483,243	753,900*
Inhabitants per room	2.17*	1.68*

* Estimates. 'Living space' estimated at 72% of 'useful space'. We presume that the population and housing figures were for exactly the same administrative units, and ignore illegal residents.

Sources: Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR, 1966, 1975

Room data: Sotsialisticheskie issledovaniya goroda, Informatsionny byulleten Sovetskoi Sotsiologicheskoi Assotsiatsii, No. 16, M. 1969, p.91

workers of all skill levels. Their incomes were at about the national industrial average for the day; the object of the study was to find a 'representative', not an 'underprivileged' sample.

The amount of housing space which they occupied is shown in table 2. One's first inclination is to think that this was an untypical pocket of slumery. But this was unlikely. The average amount of living space for these workers must have been in the region of 5.8 square metres, i.e. only 1 sq. metre less than the average for the whole of the city. The overall Novosibirsk average was in turn typical of many other large Soviet towns.

The picture can be enlarged somewhat with the help of housing figures published, rather surprisingly, for Armenia in 1967 (table 3). These indicate that many medium and small towns in the USSR - perhaps the majority - also had massive slum problems. It seems likely that the workers, who comprise the middle and lower strata of urban society, would often have lived in these conditions. The Novosibirsk sample was not too divorced from distributions given for a sample of some 8,000 migrants who moved into 33 towns in the Ukraine in 1967-9; the average amongst them was 5.6 to 5.9 metres,* against an official average of about 8 metres for the urban Ukraine as a whole. It is not, however, possible to conclude that migrants were significantly worse off than

* V.V. Onikienko and V.A. Popovkin, 'Kompleksnoe issledovanie migratsionnykh protsessov', M. 1973. Despite its interesting revelations, this study was not specifically designed to expose housing conditions, and from our point of view suffers from a number of drawbacks. Thus over 30% of the 8,000 respondents were from white-collar groups, and another 5% were engaged in agriculture. No breakdown was given of conditions specifically for each town and district from, or to which they moved; about 28% of the migrants were aged under twenty-five, and presumably had less claim to independent accommodation.

Table 2.

Novosibirsk - Workers' Housing Sample, 1966

Per capita space m ²	Total (Men and women)	% of responses
1 - 3	225	17
4 - 6	618	47
7 - 9	332	25
+9	146	11
No answer	353	100%
Total	1674	

Source: Antosenkov and Kalmyk, op.cit. prilozhenie, table 15

Table 3.

Average per capita living space in Armenia, 1966 (square metres)

All towns	5.7
Urban-type settlements	6.0
Settlements subordinate to local urban soviets	4.5
<u>Selected towns (with population)</u>	
Erevan (652,000)	5.8
Leninakan (130,000)	5.0
Kirovakan (79,000)	5.7
Artik (Less than 50,000)	4.7

The average for Moscow in that year was about 8.1 metres (Nar. Koz. figures)

Source: Zhilishchno-kommunalnoe khozyaistvo Armyanskoi SSR, (stat. sbornik) Erevan 1967, p.77

their fellows, because only 12-14% of them gave housing conditions as their main motive for migrating (pp.97-98), and most of them must have realised that as new residents they would end up worse off after their move (as indeed they did).

The question arises as to how far this position may have improved in the course of the seventies.* Between 1965 and 1975 official figures for the USSR as a whole suggest that living space for urban inhabitants rose from 7 to 8.3 square metres.** Given the figures we have just considered it is difficult to believe that Soviet workers have as yet achieved a very satisfactory range.***

* We have not found any distributions of living space published more recently, possibly because the censorship rules, which may have been relaxed in the mid-sixties, were made more stringent after Brezhnev took power. For example, per capita accommodation figures were excluded from the Gordon and Klopov study, published in 1972, although it included data on types of dwellings and amenities. Background data were excluded from Gulyan's important Latvian time-use study, published in 1976: space data were not made available for Pskov either. (These studies are discussed below).

** 70% of figures in Narodnoe khozyaistvo 1975, p.116.

*** A hypothetical distribution of workers' living space for the mid-seventies, retaining a bimodal shape as suggested by the large Onikienko sample, with an average of about 1.5 metres per head below the national figure, and presuming people with least space have been rehoused first, would be:

<u>Square Metres per capita</u>	<u>% of Workers</u>
Less than 3	5
3 - 5	20
5 - 7	30
7 - 9	20
Over 9	25

The amount of space held by an average worker tends to rise a) with his age, b) with his income (T.I. Zaslavskaya Sovremennaya sibirskaya derevnya, part 1, Novosibirsk, 1975 p.163), c) with distance from the centre of town, d) with regular involvement in local political activities. It varies inversely with family size. Chance circumstances may easily affect it.

Further evidence of acute difficulty may be gleaned from housing provision practices in some large Soviet towns. Although the average levels for Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev were by 1975 in the 8 - 10 metre range, three persons recently resident in these towns have claimed that local authorities required applicants for municipally-owned flats to have less than four or five square metres of living space each (according to locality) in order to get onto the re-housing lists. In the mid-sixties the figure for Leningrad was actually down to 3.5 square metres. A handbook of housing rules by V.P. Gribanov states that this level is determined by the local authorities, together with trade union organisations.* Obviously, these facts raise further doubt about the real meaning of official figures. Even the achievement of the long-desired sanatory norm of 9 sq. metres, as an average, means slum housing for many. The further outlook, given present trends, is only ^{mildly} encouraging. The quantity of housing construction envisaged in the 10th 5-year plan (1976-80), to judge by past years, may provide an extra 0.7 square metres of actual living space for each town dweller. But according to B. Rakitski, fourteen square metres is now considered the 'rational' norm.** Even if this figure is taken ^{only} as a national per capita average, it will, at present rates, require about eight five-year plans to achieve. Given the propensity of Soviet society, like most others, for inegalitarian distribution, there is no guarantee that slums will disappear then, either.

* V.P. Gribanov, Oznovy sovetskogo zhilishnogo zakonodatelstva, M. 1976, p.11.

** B. Rakitski, Sotsialnaya problema pyatiletki i obraz zhizni sovetskikh lyudei, M. 1976, p.27.

To judge from scattered data, Soviet workers are not too fortunate in the quality of their housing. Something may be said both about the type of accommodation they occupy and their household amenities. Table 4 shows various data for the mid and late sixties on the first of these points. The figures which, in our view, came nearest to norms for large towns are given in columns 1, 2 and 3.

The best housing is usually the separate, self-contained flat, because it is probably of fairly recent construction and provided with basic services. Privately-owned houses have their advantages, but they have drawbacks too, as many of them are built by their owners out of wood, and may be sub-standard.

Unlike enterprise or municipal flats, the capital cost of them has to be found ^{from savings} and the plots provided for their construction may be in less attractive spots, or ^{or loans,} on the outskirts of towns. Next from the point of view of desirability comes the so-called 'communal flat', in which each family has one (or occasionally) more rooms, sharing corridor, kitchen and bathroom facilities with other occupants. The texture of Soviet reality in this type of habitation would require many pages for an adequate description. We shall content ourselves by saying that most occupants of communal flats regard them as a greater or lesser evil, and the authorities are committed to their eventual replacement. Hostel accommodation is quite common in the USSR: the denizens of these institutions are mostly, but not exclusively, young, single people who have to be content with a bed and a cupboard, rather than a room. Privately rented accommodation belongs to the least satisfactory types insofar as it is usually cramped, and (by Soviet standards) extremely expensive. Baraks are semi-

Table 4.

Types of dwelling occupied by Soviet townspeople (various samples)

Types of dwelling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Separate, self-contained flat	25.3	19.0	17.0	18.4	9.0	52.3	25.9
Own house	20.3	42.5	19.8	57.0	75.0		
Communal flat	32.5	30.0	35.3	16.2	9.0	17.1	7.7
Hostel	13.1	1.5	9.7	2.9	1.5	6.5	43.1
Private rent	8.8	7.0	11.1	5.8	5.5	12.6	10.3
'Barak' and temporary			7.1	-			
With relatives	-	-	-	-	-	11.5	13.0
Not known	-	-	0.7	-	-	-	-

Sample type and sources for Table 4

1. Large towns, (L.A. Gordon and E.V. Klopov, Chelovek posle raboty, prilozhenie, M. 1972, p. 9, recalculated) 1965-8.
2. Pavlovski Pasad, (pop. 65,000) Moscow Oblast (Gordon and Klopov, ibid.).
3. Novosibirsk workers' sample, (Antosenkov and Kalmyk, prilozhenie, table 15) 1967.
4. Mariinski Posad (pop. circa 10,000) (B.S. Khorev, Maly gorod, p.131) 1967.
5. Large towns, outskirts (Gordon and Klopov, op.cit. p. 8).
6. Mostly urban families before migration to/in Ukraine (V.V. Onikienko and V.A. Popovkin, op.cit. p. 84).
7. Single people before migration to/in Ukraine (ibid. p. 84).

permanent huts, usually communally occupied and primitive in character.

In the samples shown in columns 1-3 only about 20-25% of the respondents actually had separate flats, while another 20-40% had their own houses. About a third still lived in communal flats. We would suggest that this pattern obtained for Soviet workers, as more favoured social groups would ^{have} ensured better housing for themselves.

The type of dwelling occupied, like the floor space, varies according to certain fairly obvious influences. As may be seen from columns 4 and 5, the proportion of privately-owned houses tends to be higher on the outskirts of large towns, and in small towns. That single people tend to have a considerably less favourable pattern than family men and women is suggested by columns 6 and 7. Other studies, which we shall not, in the interests of brevity, consider here, show that young people and new migrants to towns start by occupying the least attractive kinds of accommodation, and slowly improve their lot as the years or decades go by.

It seems clear that in the mid and late sixties 40% or more of the urban population were in unsatisfactory, or highly unsatisfactory types of accommodation. This meant a mass of at least 50 million people. Between 1966 and 1975 inclusive, according to the statistical handbooks, some 19.5 million units of accommodation were built in the non-peasant sector of the economy. It seems reasonable to suppose that 8-10 million of these units could be actually devoted to improving urban accommodation patterns. (Allowances must be made for a) the growth of the urban population, b) replacement of wooden and dilapidated dwellings and c) the fact that some building was in rural areas anyway). It may

be that the proportion of Soviet workers in communal flats, baraks, hostels and other sub-standard dwellings has now fallen to about a third. By the mid seventies 53% of the families in the crowded city of Leningrad still did not have a separate flat.* As American observers have pointed out, the plan to house 75% of urban families in their own apartments by the end of 1975 was not met.**

The provision of selected household amenities, including motor cars, is shown in table 5, together with American levels. The magnitudes are self-explanatory, and we commit them to the reader's perusal with only a reminder about possible differences in quality and servicing. The extreme reticence of the Soviet authorities about sanitary facilities suggests they are poor everywhere. We have seen coherent figures only for Armenia, where in 1966 only 37% of urban and urban-type living space had running water, 27% drains, and 15% had bathrooms or showers.***

Domestic Chores - Some Time Budget Studies

The international time budget study, to which the Soviet Union contributed data from the town of Pskov (1966), seems to indicate that Soviet townfolk did

* V.A. Yadov, (ed) Sotsialno - psikhologicheski portret inzhenera M.1977 p.201.

** G.E. Schroeder & B.A. Severin in Soviet Economy in a New Perspective, Washington, Oct. 1976, p.620.

*** Zhilishchno-kommunalnoe khozyaistvo Armenii, Erevan, 1967 pp. 52-56.

Table 5.

Availability of certain household amenities

	USSR		USA
	1965	1975	1975
	% of families with:		% of homes with:
Fridge	11	55	99.9
Vacuum cleaner	7	18	98.4
Washing machine	21	62	68.4
Television	24	71	99.9
	No. per '000 of population:		No. per '000 of population:
Telephones	28	63	592 (1974)
Motorcars	2*	12	493 (1974)

* Hypothetical

Sources: USSR - Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1975, p. 595USA - US Statistical Abstract, 1971, pp. 483, 536, 677; 1976, pp. 532, 594

not spend much more time on these tedious matters, taken as a whole, than their American cousins.* Furthermore, to quote a recent Soviet ^{pronouncement on} future developments, 'The accelerated rise in the well-being of people leads to a gradual change in domestic labour, and to the creation of conditions necessary for the broader use of public amenities, with the aim of lightening and reducing daily domestic work.'^{**}

Yet, given the lower standard of living in the USSR, and the housing situation in particular, there must still be important qualitative differences, between domestic chore patterns in the two societies. The task which we shall undertake here is to map ^{such of} these distinctions ^{are} as revealed in the international study and add, when possible, information on subsequent trends in the Soviet household.

The average time spent on all household chores in the Soviet and American samples is shown in table 6, and if we regard variations of a third or less as being too small to take into account, the figures (to repeat) are very similar. It is when we examine the detailed figures provided for 'primary' activities that interesting divergencies appear.

Food preparation and clearing away dishes may conveniently be taken first. Although the average amount of time devoted to this in the Soviet sample was not greatly in excess of the overall American figure, Soviet people who were actually employed were much more heavily burdened than Americans,

* For a note on the use of time budget studies, see below, p. 25.

** L.A. Gordon, E.V. Klopov, L.A. Onikov, Cherty sotsialisticheskogo obraza zhizni, Byt gorodskikh rabochikh vchera, segodnia, zavtra, M. 1977, p.34.

Table 6. Time spent on all domestic chores*
(Minutes per day)

	Pskov	44 Cities USA	Jackson USA
Housework (cooking, chores, laundry, shopping for food)	131	142	141
Other household obligations (garden, animal care, shopping for durable goods, other duties)	39	45	45
Child care, help, supervision	35	32	31
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals:	205	219	217

* Averaged out for the whole sample in each case. Though unrealistic as an actual measure (owing to sub-sample variability) the figures are adequate for comparison between samples.

Source: A. Szalai and others, The Use of Time, Daily Activities of Urban and Suburban Populations in Twelve Countries, Mouton, The Hague, 1972, pp. 562-9, 580

table 7. This was also true of housewives. We may safely regard this as a negative feature of Soviet workers' home life. The prevalence of 'communal kitchens' with shared facilities, poor kitchen sink arrangements, the lack of oven-ready foods, etc. are probably among the main reasons for it. Significantly, Soviet respondents spent, on average, eight minutes a day attending to heating and water supplies, as against the American's 0.4 minutes and 1.2 minutes, (table 8, item 1). Although the overall amount of time spent on 'eating out' appears to be about the same for both countries, Soviet respondents spent twice as long as Americans in enterprise canteens, and much less in restaurants, (items 2, 3).

The problem of inadequate retail outlets in the USSR has often been commented upon. It might thus be thought strange that the time devoted to shopping (for both comestibles and durable goods) should be less for the Pskov than for the American towns, (about eleven minutes as opposed to fifteen or eighteen, item 4). One reason for this lies in the inadequacy of the time-budget methodology. Obviously shopping can vary enormously in its content and attractiveness. A well-developed consumer sector may encourage pleasurable browsing; queues and shortages can turn the operation into a nightmare. Also, a lower standard of living can mean fewer purchases. The international time study nevertheless does provide one important illustration of such qualitative differences. Whereas the American samples recorded 1.4 and 0.6 minutes a day for 'waiting in line' the figure for Pskov was nearly eleven minutes, i.e. between eight and eighteen times more, item 5.* Soviet people spent more than twice as much

* Ironically, a recent Soviet study has shown a significant increase in the time spent shopping since investigations of 1923-24; whereas men had the same inputs for this activity, women's increased by a factor of three. The explanation offered was 'the growing role of state trade in the life of the modern urban public', (V.A. Artemov, Primenenie, p.105).

Table 7. Time spent on cooking (minutes per day)

	Pskov	44 Cities USA	Jackson USA
Total samples	56	44	44
Employed men, all days	15	7	7
Employed women, all days	82	49	47
Housewives, all days	151	94	102

Source: Szalai, p. 605

Table 8. Time spent on selected domestic activities
(average minutes per day) Szalai, p. 576

Chore	Pskov	44 Cities USA	Jackson USA
1. Arranging heat and water	8.1	0.4	1.2
2. Restaurant meals	1.8	11.2	8.9
3. Meals at work	21.8	10.2	9.3
4. Marketing and shopping	11.2	15.1	17.9
5. Waiting in lines, queues	10.9	1.4	0.6
6. Clothes upkeep	4.3	1.7	1.9
7. Garden, animal care	8.0	3.3	3.0
8. Outdoor chores	0.7	3.4	5.9
9. Other upkeep	3.0	5.7	7.1
10. Other duties	6.0	11.5	11.2
11. 'Private' activities	0.1	13.8	9.2
12. Personal travel	1.0	8.0	8.4
13. Use of repair services	0.6	2.4	3.3
14. Other services	0.1	12.3	10.4

time on clothes upkeep, this reflecting no doubt, the greater cost of these items in the USSR (item 6).

The question of garden and animal care, which appeared as a single item in the international survey, requires special mention. Garden plots are said on average to provide less than 1% of the Soviet workers' income, but for those who have access to them they can be important.* About a quarter of all Pskov households had gardens, while 76% to 90% of the Americans enjoyed this benefit. The Szalai figures show (p.582) that while every Soviet gardener devoted an extraordinary total of 105 minutes a day to these pursuits, the comparable figure for Americans was 24-27 minutes.

The reasons for this fervour on the Soviet side are a little more complex than might appear at first sight. It is not only a question of shortages of fresh fruit and vegetables, high prices, and the difficulties of purchase. The Soviet urban labour force, especially in the smaller towns, contains a large proportion of former peasants, who retain a love of the land and its cultivation. Jam-making, preserving and pickling etc., are popular pastimes for housewives. We believe therefore that cultural factors are important.**

A high standard of living brings its own penalties. The Soviet householder^{was} relatively free from a number of chores which encumbered

* Nar. Khoz. 1975, p.596. A fall from 17% in 1965 to 0.9% in 1975 is recorded. We have not uncovered any separate analysis of animal care by Soviet workers; and there is, of course, the difficulty of distinguishing between animals kept for their produce and as pets.

** Of course, some Americans may put more effort into their gardens than others, and savour their own produce as a result. The relative shortage of plots in the USSR may mean that only the more enthusiastic gardeners take them. Nevertheless, there is a noteworthy difference.

Americans. These (items 8,9,10) are detailed in Szalai as 'outdoor cleaning (sidewalk, disposal of garbage)', 'other repairs and home operations', 'dealing with bills, other papers, usual care to household members', (p.562). The American *spent* more time on 'private' matters and 'personal travel', reflecting perhaps the more individualistic nature, and greater variety of experience, in the USA, (items 11,12). The Soviet respondents also devoted much less time to mechanical and electrical repairs, and 'other services', (items 13,14). It is not clear what these services were, or whether Americans used them from choice, but presumably they did not involve the queuing covered in item 5. These again are reflections of a more opulent way of life. Although overall time inputs on 'baby and child care', seem to have been close, (17-22 minutes), there were marked differences between the Soviet and American patterns of involvement. Soviet mothers and fathers spent 2-5 times as long helping their offspring with homework, talking to them, and playing with them outdoors, but Americans were more involved with mere 'babysitting'. We hesitate to offer an explanation for this curious divergence.

Some of the Pskov data can be revealing, but they also raise questions. The first is the degree to which they are representative of the Soviet urban population as a whole. When the Soviet authorities agreed to participate in an international study they were well aware of the danger of unfavourable comparison with capitalist societies. One would expect them to choose a rather favoured town for investigation. Soviet comparisons of the Pskov data and those collected in other Soviet towns are, however, somewhat contradictory, so the safest supposition is that domestic chores in Pskov were ^{indeed} about average.*

* See table 9, below, and Statistika budzhetov vremeni trudyashchikhsya by V.A. Artemov and others, M. 1976, p.74.

A second question concerns the most common variations, both social and locational. Some clear (and perhaps expected) correlations were obtained by Gordon and Klopov in their comparative study of time budgets of Soviet towns. Their data suggested that time spent on domestic chores fell as income, educational achievement, and possession of domestic appliances improved. People living closer to the centre of towns were less burdened, presumably because of the absence of garden plots. Domestic chores on the whole took less time in large towns than in small ones. The pattern of variation was clearer for men than for women. Gordon and Klopov evidently procured a great deal of information, but their categorisations, as published, were so broad and under-correlated that only a few general trends could be discerned.*

Thirdly we must ask what evidence there is of change over the last ten years. A rising living standard would suggest some improvement in the pattern of time inputs, if not a general reduction. Alas, ^{the available time studies do not help} could only be measured ^{here. Change} by careful sampling in the same localities over a set period. No subsequent study of Pskov has come to our attention, while detailed work done in Latvia in 1972 seems to reveal substantially the same picture.** The 'aggregate working person' in Riga, for example, averaged 194 minutes a day on all kinds of housework (including child care), while the figure for 'other Latvian towns' was 213 minutes. 'Work about the house' was 118-121 minutes, but shopping alone took 30-39 minutes, (p.56).

* Another rather scholarly though restricted analysis of relationships between living standards and domestic chores, may be found in Statistika byudzhetov vremeni trudyashchikhsya by V.A. Artemov. M. 1976, p.114.

** P.V. Gulyan, (ed). I.M. Geidane & others (authors) Balans vremeni naselenia Latviiskoi SSR, Riga, 1976.

In 1972-74 an extensive investigation of time use was conducted in the Altai town of Rubovsk, (pop. circa 167,000), where the main economic activities were tractor construction and the production of building materials.* The working population there, as may be seen from table 9, had a rather lower 'chore' input than towns covered by the studies of the mid-sixties. But N.A. Balykova, a participant in the study, warned against facile interpretation of this fact. It did not necessarily imply a reduction in response to improvements in local housing and amenities, etc. Rubovsk was still very poorly equipped with local services by national standards, (the per capita expenditure on these in 1972 was only 20.7 roubles, or 57.8% of the Moscow level), though the catering services as such were relatively well developed. Noting that the 1972 levels of service in Rubovsk were still somewhat lower than those enjoyed in other towns in 1966, Balykova wrote:

"A comparison of time inputs with the general level of local services in the other towns has not confirmed the hypothesis that a quantitative and qualitative improvement in these services is accompanied by an overall reduction in time spent on household work.... It is therefore clear that the lower time inputs in various kinds of domestic labour (in Rubovsk) except for food preparation, are caused not by better cultural and communal

* This project was organised as part of a labour resources study by the Novosibirsk Institute of Economics and Organisation of Industrial Production, with the object of improving urban facilities. Some of the main results were published in Vremya goroda i uslovia ego ispolzovania, Novosibirsk, 1976, and Primenenie pokazatelei vremeni v sotsialno-ekonomicheskom planirovanii goroda, Novosibirsk, 1977, both edited by V.A. Artemov.

Table 9.

Time inputs on domestic chores and free time
(Various samples, time in hours and minutes)

Town	Year	Household chores		Food preparation		Free time	
		M	W	M	W	M	W
Gorki	1963	1:48	4:30	1:6	2:24	5:6	3:12
Ivandvo	1963	2:0	4:6	1:0	2:12	5:0	2:48
Rostov on Don	1963	2:12	4:18	1:12	2:12	5:18	3:6
Sverdlovsk	1963	2:0	4:42	1:6	2:24	5:0	3:0
Krasnoyarsk	1963	1:48	4:12	1:6	2:24	5:48	3:48
Pskov	1966	1:24	4:6	0:54	2:18	4:54	3:0
Rubovsk	1972	1:18	3:48	0:42	2:6	5:6	2:54

Source: V.A. Artemov, Primenenie..., p. 102, rearranged

amenities, but by other things, one of which may be in the public's inadequately developed requirements".

(V.A. Artemov, Vremya goroda.... p.92).

She seems to be saying that the lower involvement in chores in Rubovsk simply reflects inadequate domestic standards, so it is not a positive phenomenon at all. She goes on to suggest, even so, that those standards could, be raised by a western-type, comprehensive improvement in services.

The Rubovsk results, as published, are perhaps most interesting for what they contain on workers' attitudes towards the inadequacies of public services. Of 2541 persons questioned, 1835 or 72% made 5,440 suggestions for improving 'the use of non-working time and living conditions'. The results, rearranged in order of frequency of suggestion, are shown in table 10. The authors of the article say that the suggestions were spontaneous, and not selected from a list proffered to respondents. The "content and distribution of them to a certain extent characterised the level of material and spiritual needs of the town's population," (p.29).

Food and Drink

Food is an important element in everyone's daily life. The Soviet authorities have collected a great deal of information on eating habits, but, unfortunately for us, publish very little of it. In fact, the only usable diet data we have ^{to hand} are the annual Narodnoe khozyaistvo figures for per capita food consumption, and the 1971 breakdown for industrial workers of three

Table 10.

Remarks and suggestions of the inhabitants of Rudovsk
on reducing irrational time inputs and improving the
use of non-working time (V.A. Artemov, Vremya goroda..., p. 28)

Remarks and suggestions	No. of suggestions (Total: 5440)	As % of all suggestions	Given by % of respondents (Total: 2541)
1. Provision of goods	1473	27.1	58.0
2. Transport	1150	21.1	45.2
3. Improve shops	635	11.7	25.0
4. Urban conditions	324	5.9	12.7
5. Improvement of communal services	309	5.7	12.2
6. Medical services	291	5.3	11.4
7. Physical culture and sport facilities	229	4.2	9.0
8. Communal services	217	4.0	8.5
9. Work of catering enterprises	215	4.0	8.5
10. Work of cultural establishments	200	3.7	7.9
11. Availability of institutions for children	139	2.6	5.5
12. Organisation of holidays	119	2.2	4.7
13. Other suggestions	139	2.5	5.5

large towns and four regions.* These data are set out, together with some American figures, in table 11, and need not detain us long.

Although we would not vouchsafe complete accuracy for the Soviet/American alignment, it is clear that in general, in the mid seventies, the Soviet diet was markedly inferior to the American one. The Russians consumed half as much meat and meat produce (probably much less meat, as distinct from fat), 77% as many eggs, and about 38% as much fruit as the Americans. On the other hand they ate twice as much potato and bread, usually regarded as 'inferior' foods in the West. Soviet milk and fish consumption was higher, though the Americans seem to have been reducing their milk, egg and sugar consumption for some time. Soviet official data indicate some progress over the last decade, whereas the American diet figures (apart from showing a rise in meat consumption and the above-mentioned falls), have been rather stable.

The Soviet industrial workers in the 1971 samples were probably amongst the best fed proletarians in the country. In any case their diet was considerably better than the Soviet average, not to mention that of the peasantry. Nevertheless, they still ate much worse than the average American; and it is doubtful whether they have caught up since.**

* Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1973, p.384, and 1975, p.594. Information on food consumption is under much stricter censorship than housing. The breakdown of foodstuffs in the Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSR is very crude, while the Moscow statistical handbooks for 1966-70 and 1970-75 give figures for industrial workers, consumption in the form of percentage increases only. The conclusion is obvious.

** The output of agricultural produce has, of course, varied and we hesitate to venture into the intricacies and implications of this here. 1975, for example was an exceptionally bad year for grain, and this must have affected live-stock prospects, (Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1975, p.326). Sporadic shortages of foodstuffs continue to be reported. But any increase in state purchases of agricultural produce must be balanced against a 10% increase in the urban population during these years.

Table 11.

Annual per capita food consumption (in kilos)

	(1) USSR, 1975 whole population	(2) USA, 1975 whole population	(3) USSR, industrial workers' sample 1965	(4) workers' 1971
Meat and meat products	57.0	110.3	62.3	81.4
Fish and fish products	16.8	5.4	16.0	18.1
Milk and milk products	315.0	155.8	334.0	388.6
Eggs (number)	(215)	(278)	(177)	(275)
Vegetable oil	7.0	15.9	-	-
Potatoes	120.0	62.3	125.8	115.7
Vegetables and melons	87.0	83.2	93.5	97.9
Fruit (without wine products)	37.0	97.0	35.4	48.5
Sugar	40.8	39.7	34.2	35.5
Bread and flour products, pulses	141.0	89.1	131.5	119.6

Sources: Column (1) - Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1975, p. 594.

Columns (3), (4) - Nar. khoz. 1973, p. 384 'Food consumption in the families of industrial workers of Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Donbass, Gorki, Sverdlovsk and Ivanov oblasts'.

Column (2) - U.S. Statistical Abstract 1976, p. 95, rearranged and recalculated in kilogrammes.

The problems of the Soviet workers food cannot be discussed without mentioning his drink, in particular his alcohol consumption. This again falls within the realm of state secrecy, and we have only a few items on which to base conclusions.

There is no doubt whatever that the Soviet per capita consumption of alcohol is very high. So much can be deduced from the observed incidence of drunkenness, and the frequent strictures of criminologists about the link between drinking and crime. It is common for Soviet workers to split a bottle of vodka between three at meal-times and swallow half-tumbler of liquor at one gulp. The Soviet industrial worker's family apparently spent about 44% of its money income on 'nourishment', (Nar. Khoz. SSSR. v 1975, p.596 recalculated). According to a brochure published in 1973 the amount devoted to alcoholic drinks varied from 9.57% of the family budget of 'low income' workers and employees to 14.64% of that of families with 'high incomes'.* We cannot be sure how these figures fit together, but we believe the brochure data yield quantities of between three and nine pints of vodka a month, which is really quite a heavy going, especially if most of the drinking is done by one person.** Presumably this would be supplemented, for workers living in rural areas, by illicit moonlighting. The heavy alcohol consumption, it should be noted, is achieved under inhospitable conditions. Whereas the workers of most

* L. Kuprienko and E. Rusanov, 'Proizvodstvo i uroven zhizni naroda', p.71; M. 1973, (noted by the Radio Liberty Research Service, Bulletin No. PC 352/75 of 29 August 1975).

** The American per capita rate of imbibation in 1973 worked out at 20 pints of beer, 1.9 pints of spirit and a pint and a half of wine (U.S. Statistical Abstract 1976, p.777).

capitalist lands may retire to the welcoming flog of local cafes, beer-halls, public houses or bars, the Soviet worker has usually to drink at home, in the cheaper dining rooms (where drinking may actually be forbidden) or at the alcohol counter of his grocery store.

Some Leisure Activities

No account of Soviet workers' life styles would be complete without reference to the activities they pursue in their free time.* The difficulties of analysis are, *however*, greater than in the case of domestic chores. The range of leisure activities is wider; involvement is less obligatory, so that individual participation rates vary more: intersocietal comparison is harder.

We shall in the circumstances restrict our comments to three obviously important activities which appear to be indulged in frequently by a significant proportion of people. Such activities may be grouped around the use of the media, home study, and involvement in political organisations. Time budgets are again a convenient, though not the only, tool for analysis, and the detailed breakdown of the Pskov study can once more be used as a starting point.

a) Television, Reading, the Cinema

Table 12A contains the four most popular activities connected with passive culture and the media, as registered in the Pskov sample, (Szalai, p.577-9);

* Some figures for this quantity are given in table 9: the Szalai data for Pskov are 4 hours 18 minutes and about 5 hours for the American samples. We use the term 'free time' to include all time exclusive of a) working hours, b) time associated with work, c) physiological necessities and d) domestic involvement. 'Free time' is thus a broader concept than 'leisure'.

Tables 12A and 12B.

Leisure use - the media

Table 12A.

Use of medium	Time - average minutes per day *		% of sample participating	
	Pskov	US towns	Pskov	US towns
Watching t.v.	39	92-101	36	70-71
Reading newspapers	15	24-25	42	49-50
Reading books	29	4-5	36	5-7
Watching films	16	2-3	15	1-2

Source: Szalai, *op. cit.* pp. 577, 579

* Average over whole sample, to nearest minute.

Table 12B.

Use of medium	Time - average minutes per day		
	Pskov 1966	Riga 1972	US towns 1966
Watching t.v.	39	60	84
Reading (various)	50	39	33
Shows (various)	18	27	9

Source: Szalai, p. 576: Gulyan, p. 76

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together they took up about 80% of the average amount of time devoted to passive cultural and social pursuits.* They were also the activities with the highest participation rates, (except possibly for listening to the radio). A comparison with the American patterns reveals that the Russians at that time watched much less television and spent less time reading newspapers. On the other hand, they spent more time listening to the radio, watching films, and reading books, (though the holdings of books were much greater in American homes).

There is much evidence that the Soviet workers' pattern of time use in this sphere has changed since the days of the Pskov investigation. As may be seen from table 5, the percentage of Soviet families with T.V. sets rose from 24% in 1965 to 71% in 1974; virtually all American households had television sets throughout the period. Table 12B shows some comparable time inputs from the 1972 Latvian study. Although time, cultural and sample differences make the validity of such comparisons questionable, this study suggests that television-viewing has indeed gone up sharply. The Gordon and Klopov figures for time inputs by people who had sets in the period 1965-68 also seems to have been close to the American figure.** Thus it seems eminently reasonable to suppose that T.V. is coming to occupy as important a place in the Soviet urban home as it does in the U.S.A.

* The groups of activities listed in Szalai contained in all twenty items.

** Gordon and Klopov, *op.cit*, Prilozhenie, p.48. Average of men and women with families.

The advance of T.V. does not seem to have undermined the Soviet proclivity for the cinema. American interest in this medium, to judge from Soviet figures, fell off sharply after the mid-sixties, and by 1975, there were three times as many cinema visits per head in the USSR as in the USA (Narodnoe khozyaistvo 1977, p.371). The Riga figure for 'reading' might show a shift towards the lower American levels, (obviously more television viewing time has to come from somewhere) but as it stands it is inconclusive. Book publishing has continued to expand in both the USSR and the USA.

b) Home Study

The Soviet government has long encouraged workers and peasants to study. Khrushchev's educational policies were, of course, particularly orientated to this end. In the mid-fifties he re-established a whole series of work-release and wage benefits for part-time students, and raised numbers in part-time general, middle-special and higher educational institutions. The Brezhnev leadership has retained benefits for working youth, encouraged part-time study at the general level, but tended to discourage it at middle special and higher institutions, as may be seen from the figures below.

Enrolments in Part-time Education (000's)

	General School. Pupils	Middle Spec.Educ. Students	Higher Educ. Students	Total
1965/6	4,845	1,824	2,277	8,946
1975/6	6,199	1,707	2,226	10,133
% difference	+28%	-6%	-2%	+13%

Source: Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSR 1975, pp.667,671.

The majority of persons involved in all types of part-time study taken together are town-based workers. However, as the decade passed, the proportion of all workers participating must have tended to fall, as the non-agricultural labour force has increased by about 30% (from 77 to 100 million).

The Pskov study not surprisingly showed considerable time inputs into activities connected with home study. The overall average was 38 mins. per day, as against 9-12 minutes for the American samples. The percentages of respondents participating were 20.9% and 4.5 - 5.1% respectively.*

The time input figures provided for purposes of comparison in the Riga study in 1972 were 36 minutes for men and 18 minutes for women, giving an average of 27 minutes, (p.172). No participation rate was given, but this drop might fit a downward trend. Naturally, the time devoted to home study varied greatly from one group of workers to another. It seemed that young men in urban surrounds were most assiduous.**

The great involvement of the Soviet worker in part-time study is an object of pride for Soviet propagandists, but it is less impressive when seen in perspective. In the first place no less than 18 million Americans over the age of 17, excluding full-time students, were said to use 'adult educational facilities'; the proportion has been increasing steadily over recent years.***

* Szalai, p.580. Some distortion of the comparison, favourable to the Soviet side, must have been introduced by the inclusion of a larger number of 'students', presumably full-time, in the Soviet sample (2.2% as opposed to 1.0% and 0.5% on the American side). The difference in participation rates was nevertheless very great.

** These variables are explored in some detail by Gordon and Klopov, Prilozhenie, p.34 ff, Gulyan, p.241 ff.

*** M.A. Golladay "The condition of Education", Washington, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1976, p.184.

Secondly, the Soviet part-time middle and higher education has been criticised on medical grounds because it imposes great physical strain on participants. Thirdly, and this is perhaps the key point, the level of educational attainment of the Soviet worker was still, in the mid-seventies, significantly below that of the American worker. Indeed, the median number of years of education among employed persons in the two societies in 1975 was, according to our calculation, about 9.2 as against 12.6 years. Close comparison, going on the data we have so far, is not possible, but tables 13A and 13B give some impression of the distributions.*

c) Political Involvement

Soviet writers on political matters make great play of the involvement of the worker in the political life of their country. Political activities - licit, ones that is - are more a part of the workers' production life than of his home life, as the great majority of Party and Komsomol primary organisations are 'production based'. But since these activities usually spill into his free time, they come within the scope of our paper. Here we shall comment on the proportion of workers who (according to official statistics) are members of the Party, Komsomol and local Soviets, and the amount of time which they devote to these activities.

* The reasons for the popularity of education in the USSR are complex, but in our view a Soviet-type society has to have a well developed educational sector. Apart from the demands of rapid industrialisation, and associated income differentials, the following factors promote it: a) The removal of hereditary rights to elevated social positions b) The absence of a private business sector in the economy, where formal learning may not be needed for success or advancement c) The impossibility of seeking one's fortune abroad d) Long-standing popular respect for (or envy of) the 'intelligentsia'.

Tables 13A and 13B.

Soviet and U.S. labour force educational attainment levels

Table 13A.

USSR 1976 ⁽¹⁾		US 1974 ⁽²⁾	
Level	% of employed persons	Level	% of employed persons
Higher	8.7	4-year College	15.6
7 - 13 yrs*	68.0	9 - 16 yrs*	72.4
Less than 7 yrs	23.3	Less than 8 yrs	12.0

* Including incomplete higher education.

Table 13B.

Soviet blue collar sample ⁽³⁾	
Level	(%)
11 - 14 yrs	7.5
10 yrs	43.0
7 - 9 yrs	43.5
Less than 7 yrs	6.0

Sources: (1) Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1975, p. 38, Employed persons.

(2) M.A. Golladay, op. cit., table 5.5, Labour Force 18-64 years.

(3) N.P. Pishchulin, Proizvodstvenny kollektiv chelovek i svobodnoe vremya, M.1976, p. 102.

Table 14 is largely self explanatory. It shows, as distinct from most Soviet presentations, the proportion of workers who achieve (or are propelled into) membership of certain organisations. In 1976 no less than 9% of the workers were in the Party, (the proportion would probably have been higher for skilled workers and lower for the unskilled), 17% were in the Komsomol, and 1.25% were local deputies. In all cases there had been a cautious increase in these rates over the Brezhnev years. It has not, as far as we are aware, been accompanied by any extension of individual liberties - rather the reverse.

Political power in the Soviet Union extends no further than the 'elected' party committees, and although the representation of workers and peasants was also increasing at these levels, by 1976 only 1.4% of them were involved. Government by committee must in any case be in the hands of only a tiny proportion of any society; but when we consider that about 7% of all 'employees' occupy such positions, we see how limited is the involvement of Soviet workers in serious politics.

There are many analyses of the time which Soviet citizens devote to organised activities of a basically political character. Few of these inspire much confidence, but they at least deserve mention. The Pskov average was 56 minutes a week, as against 41-43 minutes for the American samples.* The average for the so-called 'composite Latvian toiler' was 55 minutes, while employed men in Rubovsk achieved 36 minutes (women

* The Pskov figures are amongst the least comprehensible (on account of their internal contradictions) but we adduce this average because it can be set against American data.

Table 14. Proportion of workers in selected organisations

1. Workers and mass membership of C.P.S.U.

Year	No. of workers in CPSU (Full and Cond. Members)	Total of Workers	% of Workers involved
1966 (1 Jan.)	4,365,000	57,700,000	7.56
1976 (1 Jan)	6,509,000	71,700,000 (1975)	9.07

2. Workers and peasants in elected positions in C.P.S.U.

Year	Workers and peasants elected to positions in the Party *	Total of workers and peasants	% of workers and peasants involved
1970-1	1,112,442	91,000,000	1.22
1975-6	1,321,557	94,070,000	1.40

* Total in oblast, krai committees, Union Republican Central committees, revision commissions, town, raion, okrug committees and revision commissions, partkomy, partburo, primary and shop party organisation.

Sources: 1. Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika, M.1976, p. 456, Kommunist, No. 15, 1967, p. 89.

2. Spravochnik..., M.1976, p. 463.

Other figures from Narodnoe khozyaistvo, relevant years.

Table 14 Proportion of workers in selected organisations
(Continued).

3. Workers and mass membership of the Komsomol

Year	Workers in Komsomol	% of all workers
1966	7,170,000 *	12.1
1971	8,898,000	13.4
1976	12,085,000	16.9

* Estimate.

Sources: Spravochnik..., M.1976, p. 477 and

Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR.

4. Workers and local Soviets

Year	Workers elected to local Soviets	% of all workers
1967	605,000	1.02
1971	791,000	1.2
1975	896,000	1.25

Sources: 3. Spravochnik..., M.1976, p. 474

4. Verkhovny sovets SSSR, V.I. Vasiliev, F.I. Kalinychev (eds)
M. 1967, p. 281

17.3 minutes). * Such participation rates (proportions of respondents involved) as we have found are highly variable. The Gulyan and Gordon-Klopov studies provide good analyses of the great variation of time inputs between social groups, as was the case with part-time study. Most active were men, young people, the more educated, the more skilled, better housed and better paid. As we have suggested elsewhere, the people most involved in the Party's public activities are those who also seem to benefit most from the system.

* * * * *

There is one problem which any consideration of the Soviet worker outside the factory gates must at least pose, if not answer. We refer to his popular standing in Soviet society. The 'worker' and the 'working class' have, of course, always occupied a favoured place in Marxist-Leninist thought, Soviet ideology, and indeed Soviet law. They are prominent in all propaganda media. However, there is considerable doubt about the workers' pre-eminence in terms of social respect; it is an easy matter to find evidence of low social rating for him, particularly on the part of the intelligentsia. His interest in education is, after all, also an interest in improving his social status. That such a question should remain, after sixty years of 'workers' power, is one of the main ironies of Soviet social history.

* The breakdown of this activity provided by the Gulyan study (p. 181) is as follows: fulfilling social tasks - 23.7%; elections and other civil obligations - 3.6%; meetings - 10.9%; working Saturdays - 14.6%; participation in ceremonies, etc., 23.7%; DOSAAF activities, vigilante squads, giving voluntary lectures - 7.2%; preparation and travel - 16.3%.

NOTE ON TIME BUDGET STUDIES

Household chores and some leisure activities can most conveniently be quantified in terms of the time spent on them. The time budget is a flattering medium for the study of societies with relatively low standards of living, for it does not readily reflect material levels, physical effort, or the attitudes of people involved. Thus an hour of food-preparation may represent anything from the enjoyable creation of a turkey dinner in a super American home, to a struggle to fry a knarled rissole in a Soviet communal kitchen. Both operations would register 'one hour' in a time-use table. Furthermore, greater time inputs into domestic chores are not always bad. A larger and more luxurious home requires more housework, but is still highly desirable. Despite these qualitative drawbacks, much of the time-use material available can be used to illustrate aspects of Soviet working-class reality. Since 1963 at least thirteen major time-use studies have been conducted amongst workers in large towns (apart from the Pskov study), and some of the results have been made available for publication, (see B.T. Kolpakov and V.D. Patrushev, Budzhel vremeni gorodskogo naselenia p.220 for a list going up to 1969).

The work we refer to is as the 'Pskov study' has been published in its most malleable form as "The Use of Time, Daily Activities of Urban and Suburban Populations in Twelve Countries", under the editorship of A. Szalai, (Mouton, The Hague, 1972). The Soviet contribution consisted of results of a survey conducted in Pskov, a town of about 116,000 inhabitants in 1966. The Pskov results are now a little old but there are several good reasons for returning to them here.

1. They contain items not normally shown in Soviet

published reports:

2. They have formed a point of reference for subsequent Soviet studies and are still referred to.
 3. They were aligned with American results which enable some realistic comparisons to be made.
- Time inputs without such comparison are in our view rather meaningless.

In considering them we shall concentrate on the items which were

a) most time-consuming b) most different from the American pattern. Given the variability of the medium, only relatively big differences of 50% or more will be considered as significant. The Pskov sample was not restricted to workers, but the predominance of them (51.5% of the sample, or 71.1% with low grade white collar staff and technicians) make the figure adequate for our purpose. We have mainly restricted ourselves to the data given in Section 1, as these seem to be most straightforward. The editors admit discrepancies between this and other sections.

Most people are aware of the pitfalls of time-use analysis, but a few words of caution about the figures we use from the Szalai study

are apposite. These figures are in minutes per 'average day', per 'average person' in the sample. The 'average day' is a weighted combination of the seven days of the week. It excludes holidays and seasonal variations, (which are relatively unimportant in an urban environment). The figures for the 'average person' are even more unrealistic, since they are a sample

average for both sexes, persons in all age, income, skill and occupation groups, persons of different family and housing circumstances, physical locations, etc., whether they participated in a given activity or not. As a result of all this arithmetic many impracticably small periods of activity are registered. The impossibility of matching samples and sampling procedures exactly in different lands introduces another difficulty. Averages have, however, their strengths, and if all are equally unrealistic (which we hope is the case) they bear cautious comparison.

