

## VISIT HUNGARY—AND SEE

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From the window of a comfortable Pullman car the visitor will observe with interest the new Hungarian landscape. Factories, houses under construction; puffing tractor engines on the wide fields,—this is the first impression a foreigner will gain after crossing the Hungarian border.

Travellers who expect exciting adventures at the border will be pleasantly surprised to meet polite customs officials who calmly and matter-of-factly inspect and carry out their official duties. No unpleasant experiences, no hair-raising adventures will be experienced by the newly arrived tourist.

A few hours from the border point the conductor will enter your compartment and tell you that the train is nearing the capital of the Hungarian republic, Budapest. You will look out the window and see a giant monument on top of a mountain. Its dimensions will not be realized at first sight but closer to the city it will become apparent how tall the statue, representing a woman dominating the city from atop Mount Gellert, really is.

Your travel companion will tell you that this 29-meter high memorial was built in memory of the heroes of the army of the Soviet Union who liberated the Hungarian people and is at the same time a symbol of the freedom and independence of Hungary. The base of the memorial carries a long list of fallen heroes of the Soviet Army as an eternal memento of their sacrifices in behalf of the liberation of the Hungarian people.

During the second world war Hungary and its people suffered immeasurable losses due to the devastations by the Nazi fascists. The liberated people inherited a ruined country but their vitality and self-consciousness is characterized in a glorious manner by the reconstruction work of the post-war era.

The inflation of 1945 was the greatest difficulty to overcome. To stop it and to create a stable currency was the major task of Hungarian economy. The leading party of the coalition government, the Hungarian Communist Party and its leader, Mátyás Rakosi, deputy Prime Minister, announced in the Spring of 1946 that inflation would be stopped and a stable currency created by August 1, 1946.

Reactionary economists at that time sharply attacked this announcement and claimed that stabilization could not be realized without foreign aid. But on August First, 1946, stabilization became an undeniable fact despite all reactionary machinations and intrigues and has proven a glorious test of the strength of Hungary's working society. It was characteristic of the extent of the inflation that 400 million million pengoes were exchanged into one forint, the new currency.

As soon as stabilization was effected the Hungarian people could start to rehabilitate the country's economy. A three-year economic plan was drafted to banish war damages and destruction and to reach the living standard of the last year of peace, 1938. Today, when you visit Budapest, the country is just at the end of the three-year plan, originally calculated to end on December 31, 1949. But Hungarian working people have sped up production and finished the three-year plan within two years and five months, that is, seven months ahead of schedule.

Details of the new five-year plan became public only recently. It is based on the three-year plan now to be completed and aims at even further construction, expansion of the country's productive capacity and improvement of general welfare. To give only one example of the magnitude of the new five-year

plan: while the three-year plan projected for investments six billion forints the new five-year plan allots thirty-five billion forints for new investments.

The elections held on May 15, 1949, have demonstrated that the Hungarian people stand united behind the guarantor of the execution of these plans, the welfare of the working people and the protector of the nation's independence and of peace,—the People's Front, led by the Hungarian Working People's Party and headed by Mátyás Rakosi.

As soon as your train will arrive at the Eastern Terminal it will become clear that all the stories you heard about the work and construction under a planned economy in Hungary are true. In front of the railroad station are brisk, lively crowds of happy, well-dressed people. A brand new taxi will rush you to the Grand Hotel on Margaret Island. Driving through the rebuilt Margaret Bridge you will see that many new bridges span the Danube and you also will notice the last touches being carried out in the reconstruction of the 100-year-old Chain Bridge which was blown up by the Nazis, together with all the other bridges over the Danube.

Margaret Island—this gem of Budapest affords not only quietude and peace but all the comforts of a metropolis. Aside from the modern Grand Hotel which satisfies the most exacting requirements, huge outdoor swimming pools and an indoor pool as well as other recreational facilities make Margaret Island an attractive holiday paradise. While in the past expensive entrance tickets were demanded from the people wishing to relax on Margaret Island, today the Hungarian Government makes the island available for everybody, and gratis.

Sight-seeing in the afternoon affords many interesting vistas. On clean, orderly streets we still see scaffolding, not only for the reconstruction work but more for the prettying-up, painting and repairing of the houses. Ruins can hardly be found in Budapest any longer, unless you go to the grounds of the destroyed Royal Castle. When cleaning up the debris of the castle, a victim of the world war, Hungarian archaeologists and scientists uncovered antique treasures: buildings from the Middle Ages, halls of the Knights, giant frescoes. The clean-up activities thus were transformed into an archaeological expedition. Plans call for building a scientific center on the site of the Royal Castle as soon as all the historic treasures have been uncovered and dug out.

During our sight-seeing tour it will again become apparent that your first impressions—well-dressed, well-fed and happy people—were not a *fata morgana* but hard fact. Let us visit a big department store, a State department store. Progress of Hungarian industry will become clearly evident here not only by the huge stock of merchandise but also by the large variety of the wares. Shoes, apparel, food, chinaware and cooking utensils in great quantities and excellent qualities are offered to the buying public. Crowds of shoppers in the stores demonstrate the Hungarian currency's purchasing value. In the department stores everything is available freely. There is no rationing of food nor of clothing items.

To show you the high level of customers' service in these department stores let us give you an example. In the clothing department of a store a customer is not satisfied with the way a suit is cut. The clerk thereupon draws his attention to the fact that in another State department store close by he will find a larger selection of suits. The explanation for this is that each has its special line of merchandise, one chinaware, another men's suits, women's wear, etc.

In this way nationalized commerce serves the customer's interests. No persuasion is used to sell him merchandise he does not need; what they do is to send him to another depart-

ment store where he will find exactly what he wants. One department store is not a competitor of the other, but a partner.

One of the oddities of Budapest is that while it is the capital of an industrious, working nation it is at the same time a spa. One hundred and seventeen thermal springs originate within the city limits of Budapest. Their heat reaches as high as 78 degrees Celsius. Around the springs thermal baths, health centers, and hotels were built a thousand years ago. Conquerors of the Roman Empire placed a high value on the thermal springs, and thus Hungarian watering-places look back to a thousand-year-old past.

Budapest is the world's most unique spa. You will find here everything—relaxation, entertainment, cures to restore your health—in a single package. Everything that a spa plus a metropolis can afford.

Those who like excursions will find Budapest an ideal spot. From the mountains on the Buda side an excellent view opens on the city below and the neighbouring countryside. Excursions are made easy by the funicular taking you to the top of Liberty Mountain. From its terminal on the mountain the world-renowned Children's Train will transport you to view other vistas.

The most priceless treasure of the Hungarian People's Democracy is its children and the government secures their progress not only by opening new schools and People's Colleges but by proper recreation. In the Summer of 1948, the first line of the beautifully curving Children's Railway was completed. In 1949 this railway will be extended. The railway is being manned and operated by children of 12 to 14, but, of course, under the supervision of adult railroad personnel. So far, the line has three railroad stations. Both stations and rolling stock are executed in children's size. However, adults can also travel on the cars comfortably. Tourists sometimes feel when boarding the train how good it would be to live among these children, happily, freely playing in this country building socialism.

On the Danube scheduled boat trips serve the excursionists. Each trip refreshes and rejuvenates the traveller.

But Budapest is not only a spa, or an excursionists' heaven, it is also a cultural center.

Its musical culture has a significant place in the world. The excellent performances of the Budapest Opera House are conducted by famous conductors; to mention only one, Otto Klemperer. In the capital's concert halls international and Hungarian concerts are on the regular program. In the theatres of Budapest the best plays of Hungarian and foreign authors are presented in the best theatrical tradition. Creations of the fine arts can be found in the museums and galleries. The best proof of the cultural progress of the Hungarian people is that an ever increasing number of people are visiting theatres, concert halls, art exhibits and museums.

In the Hungarian movie houses films of all nations are shown giving a cross section of the world's progressive film productions. Russian, French, British, American, Swedish, Norwegian and Hungarian films are programmed regularly.

Light music you will find in music halls, night clubs, restaurants and in the little inns in Buda. One can dine to fine gypsy orchestras and dance to excellent jazz-bands.

Hungarian hospitality is not commonplace. The curious foreign tourist will find love and warm friendship everywhere he goes. The concierge in the hotel, the driver of his taxi, policemen and waiters, the sales clerk in the store and the passers-by will all proudly point out to him his country under construction and will add equally proudly that this work is being carried out without outside help, by the industrious people and the nation's own talents, that here a free Hungarian people is building its free country.