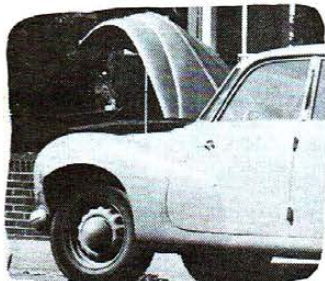
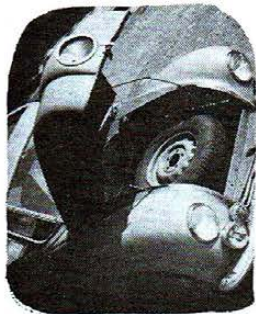


FROM  
BEHIND  
THE IRON  
CURTAIN . . .

A

COMMIE  
CAR!



### BY JACK NOVAK AS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TOLD TO FRANK CAMPBELL

**T**HE BIG problem," Jack told me, referring to his Commie car, "is that I risk being investigated—I drive the Tatra around the streets like I was enjoying myself. It's a risky business, owning this thing."

I looked up and down the hall, shut the door quietly. "Keep your voice down," I said. "I'm new here myself."

Jack had pictures of the car that was made behind the iron curtain. I drew the shades and we opened the sealed envelope. His hand trembled.

"A risky business," he repeated. "Think I could sell it?"

I studied the photos, had to admit this boy owns a good looking hunk of subversiveness. The Tatra is somewhat reminiscent of an old Chrysler or De Soto—with a fin.

"Do people stare at you?" I asked. Jack looked worried.

"All the time," he said. "Even at home in Alexandria they drive up along side in something made in Detroit and ask what is it. I used to try to explain but they never understand. Now I turn off at the next corner. I've been thinking of having cards printed."

"And on the cards—"

"The data on the car, where it comes from. And a signed loyalty oath, of course."

"Of course."

He told me about the car. It is a sedan made in 1948. To his knowledge the design hasn't changed since.

The Tatra has an air cooled 75 hp V-8 engine mounted in the rear, similar to the Porsche; luggage and spare tire go up

front. Gas consumption. Jack says, is about like a Chevy or Ford with overdrive.

Innovations (and remember this is a '48 model) include built-in lube system, a center-located third headlight, two fans to keep the engine cool when idling.

The Tatra has four speeds forward. Dry weight of the Czechoslovakian product is over 3000 lbs., therefore has a dubious power-to-weight ratio of about 40 to one. The Czechs couldn't run away from the Russian secret police in Packard-inspired Zizs.

Ground clearance is more than ample—9"; wheelbase is 112". The Tatra stands 59" high.

The central lubrication system is operated by a foot pedal; to do a lube job the driver pushes the pedal a couple of times every 100 miles and grease is directed from a front reservoir to chassis lube points—a neat stunt not often seen over here.

"I'm just a plain ordinary guy," Jack said. "I love America. Thought I might sell the car."

I raised the shades cautiously, admired the view of the Hollywood Hills. "Perhaps a motion picture company—"

He got excited. "You think they could use the Tatra in the movies?"

"Could be. If someone's doing a Russian film, maybe . . ."

I directed him to the nearest producer and the Virginia boy left hurriedly. From the window I watched the strange car with a fin move out from the curb. Then someone pulled along side and he rolled up his window, turned off at the next street.