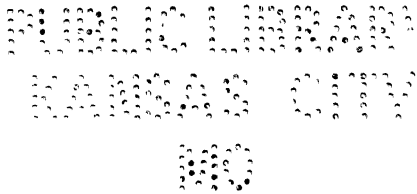

THE KREMLIN AND THE PEOPLE

Walter Duranty

THE KREMLIN AND THE PEOPLE

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To my friend, John Cooper Wiley, the "ablest of the younger American diplomats," who has served in the U.S.S.R. and knows Europe better than I do, but seldom agrees with me about either.

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THE KREMLIN AND THE PEOPLE

I. THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES OF THE U.S.S.R.

I AM SUPPOSED to know about Russia, because I've been there twenty years and speak the language fluently and have interviewed Stalin twice, and ought to know about Russia. Well, I don't know all. The Russians have a saying, "What man in his little head can compass mighty Russia?" I fear that saying is true. I know enough of the U.S.S.R. to know how little I know, and I can't explain "What" or "How." If you want that, you must read Russian books, like one called *Red Planes Fly East,* by Piotr Pavlenko, which has been translated and published in New York. Or *Cement* and *Quiet Flows the Don,* which have also been translated; or Tolstoy's *War and Peace,*

about Napoleon, which is truer today, far truer, than when it was written, in 1864, and gives you a vision seen and depicted by an artist of something which happened a hundred and thirty years ago and is being repeated, miraculously.

The essential question is "Why," and few books —certainly no short books—can pretend to expound the "What." That of course is best done by fiction. I say Chekov and Dostoyevsky will teach you more about Russia than twenty long-winded books. Because people, you know, don't change, at least they do not change quickly, their nature does not change. The Russians are always Russians, and the wonderful thing about them is that they *are* so Russian, so alike in character, although there are seventy-nine different major languages in the U.S.S.R., and hundreds of minor dialects. They act alike and think alike, and this goes for the Tsarist emigrés as it goes for the Bolsheviks at home. I say Russians are always Russians, and every Russian is the same Russian, kind, cruel, hospitable, envious, suspicious, affectionate, generous, will shoot you as soon as look, and if he happens to miss might kiss you the next minute on both cheeks.

The new Russians hate to be told this. They think they have changed their spots, or cast their swart Ethiop skin. But they haven't. They cannot escape what life made them, the way they were molded by life, for centuries, as we all are molded by years. The basic fact about Russians is that they're a childish people, a young people, full of strength, and of the heat and nonsense of childhood. They've not yet had time to grow up, because for hundreds of years they accepted more or less willingly the life and condition of slaves. There was no Magna Charta in Russia, no process of habeas corpus, no freedom of press or speech. Do you realize that in 1914 the will of the Tsar was law for the highest and the lowest, and no one could gainsay it? That the whole vast country was run for the benefit of about 5 per cent of its population, who got the plums and the gravy, while the rest of them did the work? That only one out of five could read or write, that the top-dogs lived in luxury and splendor to make even Hollywood blink, and the others lived like pigs, in filth and disease and hunger?

How can I picture all that, or the changes that I have seen? The Russian himself has not changed,

but the process of change is working. It will take considerable time. Lenin said, "Give me three generations," but he added something else: "Give me five years' talk to the children, *and my clock shall not be set back.*" He meant literally what he said, as the Freudians say and the Jesuits, that the early years are the formative years, that what you learn first lies deepest, and the short phrase, "Teach the children," is the meaning of statecraft always. Lenin doubtless used the word "children" literally, as I have said, with no reference to the childishness of his people, their swift jumps from hot to cold, from friendliness to killing, from despair to the heights of joy. Lenin would have resented my remarks, because Lenin was not childish, although he was wholly Russian, a truly typical Russian, with just a touch of the Tartar. He was born on the outer edge of what is now the Tartar Republic, at Simbirsk called Ulianovsk today, after him, because his real name was Ulianof, not Lenin.

In one of the great moments of my life, on the day after Lenin died, I heard his widow tell why her husband became a Bolshevik. He had, it seems, a brother, older than he, whom he loved. This

brother was educated in St. Petersburg, and maintained, as any boy would—he was only twenty-one—friendship and correspondence with some of his classmates there. He wrote a letter to one of them, just the usual sort of letter, about "how are things with you, and I'm doing this and that, and let me hear from you soon, and what are your plans," and so on—an ordinary letter. But it seems that the boy who received it was closely involved in the assassination of the Tsar, which happened about that time. So the Tsarist police hanged him, and for good measure hanged Lenin's brother as well, because he had written that letter.

Lenin's widow told this story in a matter-of-fact way, with accents of utmost truth. She said, "My husband loved his brother. He admired and loved him dearly. He was only eighteen when it happened, but old enough to think. He thought he would tear them down, the Tsars from their golden thrones, because this thing was wrong, it could not and must not exist. No power should have the right to take a boy from his home and hang him like a dog because he had written a letter." She said, "My husband saw that, and thought what he ought to do. He thought for a

long time before he made up his mind. And finally he thought that the source of it all was money, or rather love of money, and money's power. He thought that was wicked and bad, the limitless power of money. He had read the book of Karl Marx [which I personally think is a long dull book, and tediously written—everything Marx had to say in that long dull book was better and far more succinctly said in a pamphlet called *The Communist Manifesto* which he wrote jointly with Friedrich Engels] called *Das Kapital,* and decided for himself, this youngster of eighteen, that here was the key of the problem. And so, his widow told us, "Vladimir Ilyich Ulianof became a Marxist," and everyone knows that he has set the Marxist stamp on one-sixth of the world's land surface, which may grow bigger tomorrow, if Stalin has something to say.

I wrote the "What" about Lenin, not the "Why" nor the "How" but the "What," the "What" of his funeral in Moscow when 750,000 people stood in the snow for an average of five hours in a temperature thirty below zero Fahrenheit, to have the honor and privilege of walking through the room where his body lay in state, to

say farewell to their leader. That story wrote itself, I saw what I saw and wrote it regardless of length, ten thousand words a day, and Mr. Sedgwick, then editor of the *Atlantic Monthly,* whom I did not know, sent me a message out of a clear sky saying, "Your Lenin story was grand." That's the kind of thing that makes a reporter feel good. It doesn't happen often, but when it does you feel good.

If you catch the implication of this not-so-modest passage, it is that I *can* write "What." But I won't do it in this book. The thing that matters is "Why," and the only way to know "Why" is go back to what went before, to seek and find the cause, in order to know the effect. Let me show you at once and simply the book I am trying to write. It's this, that starting from Kirof's murder in 1934, I saw the gradual development of Nazi action against the U.S.S.R., which culminated in war on June 22, 1941. Do not think that the "Trials" and the "Purge" are dead bones, without flesh or substance. The men whose last words I relate are dead . . . that I know . . . and dust; but the reasons behind their crimes, or follies, or misdemeanors, is the answer to Russia

today, the reason why Russia has fought bravely.

At this point I take time out for some personal explanation. I am, you see, a reporter, and I care for "none of these things," as they said of the Roman Gallio in the long-past days of St. Paul. I don't care for their "isms" and "ologies," I want only to find the truth and write it as best I can.

I thought, if you want to know, that the Bolsheviks were disgusting: I was in Latvia in late 1919 and early 1920 with the army that fought the Reds. And beat them, the only time they were beaten, did the Lettish Army, which re-took its province of Lettgalen, and drove the Reds out of this Lettish province. I met scores of men and women who had suffered hell and worse from the Bolshevik Revolution. I thought the Bolsheviks were terrible. What's more, I had been at French Headquarters in the last year of the war, and there it was an article of faith that the Bolsheviks nearly killed us, that their Peace of Brest-Litovsk had betrayed the Allied cause and released a million Germans to shatter the Allied line. They did shatter it, in March, 1918, when they knocked to pieces a British army, and it seemed to us who knew that the road to Paris was open, with all which

that implied. From March until July, the Germans looked like winning, because of that Bolshevik Peace, and didn't I know it and know! The day of their final offensive, July 15 it was, the French Headquarters told me: "Write your story down, make it pessimistic. We are not really afraid, because the Americans are coming at the rate of half a million a month, but make it pessimistic, because we may lose Paris, or have Paris under the gun, and that is a kettle of fish. Write your story dark and down, so the folks at home will know how strong the Germans still are, and how much we need their help."

As it happened, that drive was checked. The Fourth Army under Gouraud held the Germans where they hit, and in the center of his line were Americans helping him hold. Four days later, on the nineteenth, Foch counter-attacked near Soissons, but even then Headquarters was doubtful, at the beginning. They said: "Don't call it a counter-offensive. You can say that our troops have attacked, but don't call it a counter-offensive." This is the truth that I am telling you, and it is interesting. They said that at 9 A.M., but at noon they said: "Now you can write that the Allied forces,

French, British and American troops, have attacked the enemy on an eighty-mile front facing Soissons and driven him back at all points. For the first time this year the Allies have the initiative." So they did, and never lost it, and the war was won in three months.

Anyway, when I went to Moscow in August, 1921, with the Hoover Relief people, carrying relief for that ghastly famine which menaced thirty million lives and at the peak feeding eleven million men, women, and children, and saving their lives—when I went to Moscow, then I thought the Bolsheviks were dreadful. I thought they were murderous apes and enemies of God and man. I thought that, but the strangest thing is that when you are helping people—and even in my way I was helping, by writing stories about what the A.R.A. (American Relief Association) was doing for the Russians—I say when you are helping people you somehow begin to like them. All the A.R.A. folks felt like that; they didn't like the Bolsheviks, but they were helping them, or anyway helping the Russians, in an hour of the blackest need. They'd have died like flies without us, they were dying as it was, and we helped them

and had to like them: it's a psychological truth. So I said to myself, "O well . . . I rather do like the Russians. They may be as bad as I thought, but I rather do like the Russians. And anyway, why should I care? . . . it wasn't *my* people they killed." That was, if you'll allow me, the first stage in my education.

The next one came later when I picked Stalin out of six possible successors to Lenin. It was some time in 1923 when I knew that Death's hand was on Lenin's shoulder. I knew that he was doomed, and looked at the men around him, to see who might carry his torch. The one that I picked was Stalin, for reasons too long to tell here, and I picked him and backed him throughout, the way that you back a horse. He said to me once himself, "You bet on the right horse." Ostensibly, he was talking about Russia, but he knew and I knew that he really meant he was talking about himself, that I had picked him first and bet on him throughout. Against Trotsky, or Tukhachevsky, or Yagoda, or Bukharin, or any of them.

I backed Stalin the way you back a horse, until you think of it as *"your"* horse: though it may belong to Whitney or Widener or someone, you

think of it as *your* horse because you always backed it. That's how I felt about Russia, that's how I feel about Stalin. I don't care a whoop for socialism, or totalitarianism, or any of their "isms." Oh, perhaps, some day in the future, but hardly today, and certainly not for us. Maybe the Russians can make good with State capitalism, which isn't quite socialism, and surely isn't communism, but why should *we* follow their line? I think that our trend is clear, toward State-controlled capitalism, but socialism as I have seen it in the U.S.S.R. does not work so well thus far.

Now let me tell you my story, which is interesting, as you will find. It does dig up dead bones, and tells about men who lost and perished and might be forgotten, unless I dug them up, but it also tells the "Why" of today, why the Germans are fighting Russia, and why Russia is holding the Germans.

I think, however, that now at the outset I should say something about the men who are running the U.S.S.R. Stalin, of course, is the center, a shortish thickset Georgian in his early sixties, whose bushy hair and mustache are turning gray; strong of body, well-educated in a religious seminary, from

which he was expelled for "seditious tendencies." I asked him once why he used the name Stalin—his real name is Josef Vissarionovich Djugashvilli. I'd thought that he probably had been doing underground work in the old days in some steel plant and took the name Stalin from that. As Lenin chose his name because he was fired with anger by a massacre of workers in a goldfield strike on the Lena River, so thenceforth he signed himself Lenin, for remembrance. Stalin shrugged his shoulders and smiled—he has an attractive smile, but his eyes can be cold as steel, as I know because the first time I talked with him he got angry at something I said and it made me feel uneasy the way he looked at me—and said, "No, it wasn't like that, the name just seemed to happen, my friends seemed to think it suited me." His health is good, but he is said to have a dilated heart, not mortal nor even dangerous, but precluding hard physical exertion.

A story was told about that, some years ago in Vienna, before the Nazis moved in, that one of the notable heart specialists in that city of great physicians flew suddenly east on a plane. And arrived next day in Moscow, at the Kremlin.

He'd been asked, for a very large fee, to report on Stalin's health. He examined the Red leader thoroughly, then was directed to another room where they told him to write his report. He did so and thought it was finished, but it wasn't. They summoned him back again to examine *another* Stalin, and *another* and *another,* five in all, and each time to write a report. To him they all looked the same, or nearly so, but his diagnoses were different. One man could not live three months; another was also doomed; one had a dilated heart, but with care might live twenty years. One had nothing wrong whatever, and one a slight cardiac murmur. The professor wrote the reports, and flew back to his native Vienna; but he did not know and could not tell the world which Stalin was sick or well. I think that's a charming story, but I fear that it is not true. The physician in question did fly east suddenly, canceling all his engagements, but only to Bucharest, for Queen Marie of Rumania.

Stalin is the ruler of the U.S.S.R.; he has greater power over more people than any man ever before him, save the peerless Alexander, King of Macedon, and Lord of the then known world. Stalin is modest and talks low, with few gestures.

In public speeches he uses notes for data material only. He is not an exciting speaker, but makes each word count. I once wrote a piece for the *New York Times* Magazine Section based on Hakluyt's account of the visit of Queen Elizabeth's envoy, Sir Richard Chancellor, to the court of Ivan the Terrible. I implied, pretty clearly, the parallel between Ivan and Stalin, and a Communist sheet in New York screamed its head off and said I deserved to be shot, for lese-majesté or something. But Karl Radek, who then was still friends with Stalin, told me later that Stalin had read my piece and thought it rather good. His greatest qualities are perseverance and cool judgment of men and things. He is a Georgian, as you know, a "hot" race, like the Irish, but he has learned to control his hotness and master it and keep cool, like the late Charles Murphy of Tammany Hall, New York, whom I think Stalin resembles.

The next man is Zdanof, heavy, in his early forties, who they say is Stalin's successor, now political boss of Leningrad. The best mind in the Kremlin group, Marxian theorist but clear, devoted to Stalin, as indeed are all the others. Stalin picked out the men he had worked with in the old

days. Each one of them, Molotof, Voroshilof, Kaganovich, Mikoyan and the rest, had worked with him in the old days under great pressure, and they trust him and he trusts them. But amongst them there are two young ones, too young to have worked in the old days, this Zdanof, and Beria, Commissar of the Interior, or "NKVD" as they call it, alternatively known as the OGPU. I think he comes third on my list. Beria is a Georgian, tall, handsome, rather studious-looking, with pince-nez, educated, also in his early forties. He ended the Purge, that's enough, and perhaps saved the whole regime.

Molotof, Commissar of Foreign Affairs, is a sturdy, solid fellow, who never was a genius, but can always be relied on. When Stalin asked Lenin to admit Molotof to the Central Committee of the Party, Lenin said, "Why that one? . . . A good, dull, plodding creature, and if you want him, why not? . . . But I don't quite understand . . . If you want my opinion, the best filing-clerk in Moscow."

For once Lenin was not right. I mean, Molotof may be a plodder, and is surely a dull speaker, but he gets there just the same. He's a man who has

grown with his job, not brilliant but ever so sound, the sort of man every State ship needs as ballast, a man upon whom an administration can depend.

Kaganovich, the only Jewish member of the Politburo, is tall and brilliant and rather gay. Some foreign observers think his star is under a cloud, but I rate him high in the list. I met him once at a lunch for some subway engineers. You've heard of the Moscow subway, how they built it with drive and sweat, and made it a peasant's dream of colors and shining marble, to up-catch and pass America—they've done it with their subway, and the peasants come and wonder. To be frank, it makes the New York subway look like a dirty nickel, and it works, not quite so well perhaps as the New York subway, but it works, and it looks like Solomon in all his glory. The most amazing subway, which Kaganovich built. He's the Kremlin's best pinch-hitter, Commissar of Heavy Industry, which was in a mess and he pulled it out, and nowadays Commissar of Oil, which is the blood of a country in modern war.

Voroshilof, Commissar of Defense, has Molotof's solidness plus. Popular with the Army and

the country, he once made an inspection trip to Siberia that led me to compare his speeches with the Letters of St. Paul. High praise but not undeserved. Voroshilof is nearly sixty, but is still one of the best pistol shots in the Red Army. Of the soldiers, I'd say the best is Shaposhnikof, Chief of Staff, an older man who graduated with high honors from the Tsarist Staff College and was, I believe, a colonel, or anyway a ranking officer, in the Tsarist Army during the last war. Timoshenko is another good one, cautious and a thinker. I couldn't understand when I read the first German communiqués after they struck at Russia, when they said that they'd captured thousands of tanks and airplanes and troops and Lord knows what else, in the outer skirmish zones, the territory which the U.S.S.R. had "recuperated" in Poland and Bessarabia and the Baltic and South Finland, to serve it as skirmish zones, to delay and harass the Panzers. I did not understand how Marshal Timoshenko, the Soviet Generalissimo, a heavy-built, stubborn Ukrainian, could possibly have risked his main force and equipment in these outlying areas. The answer was that he didn't. He held to his plan of battle, and met the Germans

head-on, in his "battle zone" at Smolensk, and all along the old frontier from Odessa to Leningrad. In the Lower Ukraine they broke through, because the ground there is flat, unwooded and good for tanks.

Marshal Budenny is the most colorful of the Soviet soldiers, a ten-strike typical Cossack, tough as death and hard as a flint. With a sweeping Cossack mustache, and a marvelous Cossack "panache," hard drinker, hard swearer, hard rider, a soldier like Stewart or Murat. Short, stocky, strong as an oak, a fighting man amongst men. There are stories about Budenny, but I haven't time to tell them, a great guerilla fighter, but not, I think, a strategist. His Chief of Staff has the brains, but Budenny has what Russia needs in this stark and bitter winter: the courage of a man who will never admit that he's licked.

The next one is Mikoyan, a sharp, black-eyed Armenian of about fifty, and brighter than any button. He is Commissar of Trade and exceedingly close to Stalin.

Andreyef is a man of importance in the Kremlin hierarchy. He stands for the Party conscience, he's head of the Control Commission, which

thinks how the Party should think. And Kalinin, the old peasant President, who thinks how the peasants think.

There you have the men who run Russia, and if I were placing bets, I'd put them in this order: Stalin first; then Zdanof and Beria, almost tied for second. Then Mikoyan and Kaganovich, again tying for third.

II. KIROF'S MURDER

THE MURDER OF Kirof at Leningrad in December, 1934, was a turning point in Soviet history, if not in the history of Europe and the world. Perhaps it was even the first shot fired in the Russo-German conflict which did not burst into open flame until June, 1941.

By a sinister coincidence, that same autumn had witnessed another political assassination—the murder of Alexander of Serbia and the Frenchman, Barthou, at Marseilles—which was also a direct signpost along the road of things to come. Had Barthou lived, he who died stupidly by the error of some excited fool who put a tourniquet

in the wrong place on his arm, the Franco-British policy toward the Soviet Union might have been saved from such hands as those of Chamberlain-Wilson and Laval-Bonnet. The rape of Czechoslovakia might have been avoided—and even Hitler's whole progress from Vienna to Prague.

I rate the murder of Kirof as a no less momentous event because it marked the end of a period of internal conciliation in the U.S.S.R. and drove the Kremlin to the fantastic "Treason Trials" and the "Purge," which undermined Soviet prestige abroad and thus aided the machinations of Hitler and his friends in London, Paris, and elsewhere.

Stalin was sitting with Kaganovich and Voroshilof in the latter's study in the Kremlin when the news of Kirof's murder came to Moscow. The three men were close friends, but it is typical of the "ivory tower" in which dictators must live that it was to Kaganovich, then head of the Moscow Comparty Secretariat and, as such, political boss of Moscow, that the messenger addressed himself.

"Can you come with me, Comrade Kaganovich? There is someone who wants to speak to you."

They had been talking about Russia's role in the League of Nations, which the U.S.S.R. had joined not long before. Voroshilof had been skeptical from the outset, but Stalin thought that the League with all its imperfections might nevertheless prove an obstacle to war. He said, "Our program, you know, requires peace. You must know that this country needs peace. We've had enough trouble to put the collective farms across, and how dearly it has cost us. Remember what Lenin said about the need for a breathing-space. No less we need peace for industry to set it working efficiently. Then, too, there's our internal problem, the former Opposition, which was envenomed by the struggle with the Kulak opponents of the collective farm system."

"That's all over," said Voroshilof. "The Opposition is finished—all save Trotsky, and we've thrown him out into Turkey to howl like a wolf in the steppe. The rest of them all caved in, and said they'd behave well in future. But about this League of Nations, I'm not sure . . ."

Kaganovich interrupted. "At least, it's the best we can do and . . ."

At that point the messenger came in, and Kaganovich went out with him.

The man led him quickly to an anteroom where an OGPU officer in uniform was standing amongst a group of white-faced secretaries. He looked at Kaganovich and said, "We have just received this telegram from Leningrad."

The message was laconic:

KIROF SHOT DEAD IN HIS OFFICE TODAY BY NICOLEYEF WHO WOUNDED HIMSELF UNFATALLY IN SUICIDE ATTEMPT STOP AWAIT INSTRUCTIONS.

Kaganovich read the telegram without any change of expression. For a year or more he'd been imitating Stalin's impassivity and had even dressed his hair and mustache to make him look more like his leader. "All right," he said. "You wait here," and hurried back to tell Stalin.

Within an hour, Stalin and Voroshilof were rushing off to Leningrad on a special train. They talked all through the night in fury and perplexity. More perhaps than Voroshilof and Kaganovich, Sergey Kirof was close to Stalin, although a

junior in years. One of the toughest of the younger Bolsheviks, he'd been Stalin's man from the start, and Stalin had made him Party chief in Leningrad to counteract and destroy the influence of the Opposition leaders, Zinovief, Yevdokimof, and Bakayef.

After the Opposition was broken, Kirof showed an unexpected vein of generosity. All through the year 1934, he had argued for mildness and conciliation towards the repentant Oppositionists and, for that matter, to the anti-collectivist peasants who had been exiled in tens or hundreds or thousands in the fight to socialize agriculture. Despite their difference in age, or perhaps because of it, Stalin, the hard man of steel, had a warm affection for Kirof and was said to have chosen him as his eventual successor.

Stalin was sore at heart and spoke savagely about the "dogs who let Kirof die." But some doubts were mixed with his anger, because hasty telephone talks to Leningrad had informed him that Kirof's murder might be nothing more than a *crime passionel.* The story, you see, was this. Sergey Kirof, a young, full-blooded man, had a handsome secretary, whose name, I believe, was Katya,

and she had a worthless husband, whose name was Nicoleyef. He'd been at one time a member of the Communist Youth Organization and perhaps still was a member, although his standing was low. He'd gotten in trouble in Archangel, or somewhere up north, about some accounts or something, and had nearly been expelled from the Party. But his wife was Kirof's secretary and Kirof was said to like her. At any rate, there was little doubt that Kirof had protected this young man from the consequences of his misdemeanors and perhaps—or so it was whispered—had promised him advancement. Such things have occurred in other lands since the days of David and Bathsheba, when, if you remember, that lady's husband was given a front line command by order of King David. Nicoleyef was more flattered than distressed by Kirof's penchant for Katya, but the thing that annoyed him was that he didn't get the advancement. So, one day at the end of October, he ran out and caught hold of Kirof as the latter was getting into his automobile and began to plead his case about the job he'd been promised.

Kirof said, "Oh, never mind that now. I haven't

time for that now. Come and see me tomorrow or some time."

It seems that Nicoleyef looked ugly, because one of the guards caught hold of him and pinned his arms and said, "Hey, you, get back there! Can't you see the boss is busy? Now, shut up and get back as I tell you, or else . . ."

Subsequent inquiry laid an ominous construction upon this incident, and that unhappy guard was shot one fine morning because he had not apprehended Nicoleyef and taken him to the guard house and searched him to see if he carried a gun. But what is a soldier to do when he knows, as this one knew, that Nicoleyef was the husband of Kirof's favorite secretary?

At this point, there comes into play a strange and dangerous factor. It has long been an axiom of history that the slayers of great men, the political assassins, have mostly been fanciful creatures with slight or imagined wrongs, upon whom a more baleful mind has worked subtly to urge them forward.

In the case of Kirof there are ample grounds for supposing that such an incitement existed. He was, we must remember, the advocate of concilia-

tion inside Russia, of giving the former Oppositionists a chance, and of letting the Kulaks come home. He stood for more than that: he had persuaded Stalin to allow the intellectuals and the doubters and the "camp-followers," in fact, everyone who was not an orthodox Party member, to co-operate in the second Five Year Plan, which had been launched just about that time with a mighty flourish of trumpets. Kirof represented an era of amity and internal peace which was doubtless to Russia's interest but was far from welcome to the OGPU, whose activities and power had been vastly extended during the fight with the Opposition and the Kulaks in the past five years.

It may well be possible, and indeed was later almost proved, that Yagoda, the OGPU chief, looked askance at the peaceful prospect before him and saw that as far as he and his men were concerned "Othello's occupation was gone," that the numbers and prestige of the OGPU must inevitably dwindle, as the need for their services diminished. Perhaps then Yagoda, through his subordinates, used Nicoleyef as a tool. He did not dare overtly to plan, or even countenance, Kirof's murder, but he or one of his Chekists may have

thought it a good idea to let Nicoleyef make a flamboyant attempt on Kirof's life and thus impress upon Kirof and Stalin above him the permanent necessity for a large and powerful OGPU to protect them.

This theory may seem far-fetched to the average American reader, but it was a classic form of provocation used by the Tsarist police and has not always been neglected by the police of other countries. Be that as it may, Nicoleyef once more approached Kirof in Kirof's office, or rather just as Kirof was leaving his office. Nicoleyef hid behind the door and as Kirof came out, he shot him in the back of the neck and then turned the pistol upon himself and shot himself through the breast without any fatal effect. His motives, I think, were mixed. I think that he felt aggrieved that Kirof had promised him something and failed to deliver the goods, but I think that also, behind his feeling of grievance, there had been the whetstone of some other more crafty mind to sharpen that grievance to action.

Stalin and Voroshilof knew this story and it worried them. Even then, they may have guessed there was something more behind it, but of that

they could not be certain. And were not certain for at least two years. What Stalin did was immediately to order the arrest of the Leningrad head of the OGPU and his two principal subordinates on grounds of culpable negligence. In due course of time they were shot. It is probable, although of this I have no sure knowledge, that Stalin himself talked with Nicoleyef, who at that time maintained obstinate silence. Later, after he was confronted with some of his former intimates and with his own diary which was found in a friend's room, and after the OGPU had worked on him for a month or so, he made one of the strange Russian confessions which so surprised the world at the big public Treason Trials in subsequent years. I shall refer to this topic later.

Nicoleyef's trial was not public, and the newspapers only carried a brief item that he and some accomplices had been sentenced to death and shot. Despite what followed, I do not think that the Kremlin—by which I mean Stalin and his nearest associates in the Politburo—was at first aware of the possible implications and ramifications of the Kirof assassination. I think that they were by no

means sure *at the time* that the *crime passionel* motive was not, after all, the chief one.

There is also reason for doubt concerning Yagoda's attitude. He was a murky spider, that one, spinning mysterious webs, Lord of the High Justice and the Low, like Yezhof after him, to Russia's bane. At his own trial some three years later Yagoda assented to the prosecutor's statement that he, Yagoda, had connived at or even fomented Kirof's murder. Perhaps he may have done so, although I doubt it, because the Leningrad OGPU chief was one of the few people for whom Yagoda —a more cold-hearted scoundrel than anyone now alive except Himmler—had any feeling of friendship. He must have known that his friend would be the first to suffer, as he did suffer, for Kirof's death. So I am inclined to suppose that his "connivance" was initially limited to the idea of allowing an attempted assassination, when the OGPU would nip in at the last minute and save the hero from death. But the effect would have been produced and the Kremlin would have realized the necessity of maintaining the OGPU in all its powers and numbers to shield the State and its leader from hidden foes.

There was, *at the time,* no suggestion that a foreign enemy's finger had been dipped in the Kirof death-pie, but, as earnest of what was to come, Zinovief, former political boss of Leningrad, whom Kirof had succeeded, and Kamenef, also an ex-member of Lenin's Politburo, and Bakayef, another prominent figure in Zinovief's Leningrad Secretariat, were put on trial, held secretly in 1935, on a rather vague charge of complicity in Kirof's murder. And acquitted. All three had been in opposition to Stalin in the years 1924 to 1929, during which that shrewd and tenacious statesman played both ends against the middle and each end against the other in a way that has never been equaled except by the late Charles Murphy of Tammany after Richard Croker's retirement. Stalin used Kamenef and Zinovief to hamstring Trotsky, his principal opponent, then took Rykof and Bukharin to crush Kamenef and Zinovief. After that, he dealt quite easily with Bukharin and Rykof. All the while he was building his own power—you might almost call it a party within the Party—from the men he had known and trusted in the years when Tsarist reaction was triumphant, between 1906 and 1916.

This may sound like old wives' tales and ramblings of the past but it is really important in its bearing on past and present. Because there arose a feeling among the Bolsheviks between the Western exiles, those who had fled in pre-revolutionary days to Europe, and the others who stayed in Russia. The "Westerners" were Trotsky and Kamenef and Zinovief and Radek and Rykof and others who got away and sat talking revolution in little cafés in Paris and Berne and London and where you please. Among them, but how far above them, was also Lenin himself. Meanwhile, Stalin stayed in Russia and Voroshilof was there, and Molotof and Mikoyan and many more now dead; devoted men, tried in the fire of Tsarist persecution and police provocation and treachery all around them. They lived "underground," as they called it, with different names and faked papers and phony addresses. They were constantly being arrested and tortured and imprisoned and some of them fainted and died and others fell by the wayside, but the best ones held on and took it, like Bunyan's Mr. Standfast. Of them the leader was Stalin, and in leading he learned to know them, to know the men he could trust and almost uncon-

sciously to despise the Western exiles who sat abroad in their squalid cafés and talked about what they would do. But always Lenin was different, they all knew he was utterly different.

The first time I interviewed Stalin, in the fall of 1929, I wrote in my report that he was the "inheritor of Lenin's mantle." When that evening I showed him my story, as had been arranged beforehand, he scratched this phrase out and wrote instead, "Lenin's most faithful disciple and the prolonger of his work." I know—and this isn't guesswork or historical reconstruction—I know that Stalin's mainspring was and is devotion to Lenin. He thought, and doubtless correctly, that Lenin was one of the Great Ones, the inspired teachers of humanity like Confucius, Buddha, and Mohammed, who come once in a thousand years. Stalin sneered at the Western exiles, damned them as loafers and apes while he and his friends were being sweated in Tsarist prisons or frozen in Arctic wastes. But he never thought that of Lenin. He knew deep down in his heart that Lenin was always Lenin and what Lenin did was right. I don't care what Trotsky has said or Trotsky's friends, like Max Eastman and meaner folk who

don't write so well as Max Eastman and haven't half his brains. I say that Stalin today, and always since Lenin died, has never made a decision nor even approached a decision without first asking himself, "What would Lenin have done in this case?" And thinking what Lenin would do and how he would do it and why.

Stalin is not an arrogant man, although he is master and lord of a large and populous country. In meetings of the Politburo, he never says as Lenin used to say, "Here is the way things are and here is what we must do. If any of you have better ideas and can prove to me they are better, go ahead." Stalin doesn't act like that. He says, "Here is the problem, and perhaps one of us"—say, Voroshilof, if it's a military matter, or Mikoyan if it's commerce, or Kaganovich for industry—"will tell us what he thinks." After that, there is general discussion while Stalin sits and listens. He may lead the conversation as a lawyer can "lead" a witness, but when the decision is reached it is, or appears to be, a joint not a single decision. Yet Stalin has greater power and wields it with greater severity than Lenin ever did.

In the years after Lenin's death, Stalin shattered

his enemies piecemeal and then, which may seem surprising but really was consummate skill, he got them all into a bloc—how distrustful and mutually suspicious a bloc can only be understood by people who know politicians, not only Russian politicians, but any politicians—and washed them all off the map. One, Trotsky, he exiled abroad, and afterwards regretted it. The others were sent far away to think what they should have done and wonder why they hadn't. He let them trickle back. They said they'd be good as gold, they said they'd been foolish and bad. They said they were very sorry and wouldn't Stalin forgive them?—and allow them perhaps to receive some minor but useful positions in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, which they, while Lenin was living, had done so much to create.

Pravda and *Izvestia,* the chief organs of Soviet official opinion, shrieked loudly that Kirof's assassination had sent a shudder of horror through the length and breadth of the U.S.S.R., that in every peasant cottage and every city tenement the blood of the workers and peasants was boiling with indignation and eagerness to demand a full investigation and the most condign of penalties. I think

that was somewhat exaggerated. In fact, I believe that the inner doubts, which again I say *at that time* afflicted the Bolshevik leaders about the true facts and motives of the murder, had seeped down through the Communist Party to the mass of the people and made them uncertain too. They knew, of course, that no prominent Bolshevik had been murdered, for political or other reasons, since Uritsky in 1918, he who was also boss of Leningrad, or Petrograd as they called it at that time, and therefore that Kirof's murder was a direful thing and a portent. But they got no clear directives; there came no clear directives from the Kremlin down to the people.

III. THE KAMENEF-ZINOVIEF TRIAL

DESPITE THE ACQUITTAL of the Zinovief-Kamenef group in the middle of 1935, they were all retained in custody and subjected to further examination by the OGPU. This looks like a further proof of the Kremlin's initial uncertainty about the Kirof murder and its growing conviction that the crime was political rather than personal. Trotsky and his supporters abroad have frequently claimed that all the Trials were faked in order to rid Stalin, the "tyrant," of the Bolshevik Old Guard. They add that the process of false evidence, pressure, and trickery gradually acquired momentum until it developed into the

monstrous horror of the "Purge" in 1937-38. The Stalinists on the other hand declare that new facts and data were gradually discovered and disclosed to establish the existence of a gigantic conspiracy, or rather series of conspiracies, whose threads extended beyond the borders of the U.S.S.R. and were connected with anti-Soviet organizations in Germany and elsewhere. Future historians will probably accept the Stalinist version, but it has two elements of weakness, first that the Purge did later become a sort of universal madness, and second that all OGPU proceedings during this period were open to suspicion through the character of its then chief, Yagoda, who himself was afterwards shot as a traitor.

Be that as it may, Kamenef, Zinovief, and fourteen other members of the so-called "Trotskyite terrorist center" were brought to public trial in Moscow in August, 1936, before the Supreme Military Tribunal presided over by Ulrich. They all were found guilty and shot, and the verdict stated expressly that they had planned the murder of Kirof and were planning the murder of Stalin and other Soviet leaders with the assistance, not only of Trotsky and other anti-Stalin Commu-

nists, but of the German Gestapo. To this the accused confessed, although little documentary evidence was produced in court. Indeed, the accused wept and wailed and beat their breasts and snarled at themselves and each other in mutual accusation. The Trial shocked the world and gave most foreign observers an ugly impression that the prisoners must have been "worked on" to make them behave like that. I was not present myself, but that is what my colleagues felt, and that was the way they wrote it. Later Trials, which I did attend, were handled differently, but the Kamenef-Zinovief case set the tone, so to speak, and created a most damaging effect abroad.

There are three points about the Soviet Trials which must not be overlooked. First, they were cases of high treason tried by court-martial, whose procedure in all countries is greatly different from that of civilian courts. Second, it appears to be the Russian principle, at least in the case of crimes against the State, to treat a man as guilty until he can prove himself innocent, on the theory that better nine innocent men should suffer than one guilty man escape. Third, a rule or practice that persons accused of high treason in the

U.S.S.R. are not brought to trial until they have confessed. This is an old ecclesiastical doctrine which may arise from a failure to distinguish between sin and crime. It was current in Europe during the dark period of the Middle Ages, when the clear and masterly justice of Roman Law had been forgotten.

What strikes me, however, as the gravest flaw in the Soviet system is the "confusion," or duplication, of the arresting authority, the examining authority, and the judging authority. People were arrested and held in prison by the OGPU without right of appeal to lawyers or habeas corpus, or any sort of publicity. They were examined by officials of the OGPU and brought to confession. Finally, they were tried by a tribunal in which judge and prosecutor were so close to the OGPU as to be scarcely distinguishable from it. And then, if condemned, they were executed by the OGPU. The trial itself, therefore, was no more than a "demonstration process," as the Russians called it, for the benefit of the public, and a method to determine the respective degrees of guilt of the accused, and to pronounce their sentence. Zinovief, Kamenef, and the others were dead men, and all of them

knew it before their "Trial" began. I received an illustration of the difference between American and Soviet thought in this matter, at the opening of one of the Trials, in the shape of a cable from my managing editor. It ran:

DON'T LIKE YOUR TENDENCY ASSUME GUILT OF ACCUSED BEFORE TRIAL EVEN BEGUN.

No reproof could be juster or more natural from the American standpoint. Nevertheless, I had written my dispatch from the official Act of Indictment, according to which the accused had confessed and admitted their guilt, and consequently the chief purpose of the Trial was, as I have said before, to decide the degree of guilt and punish it.

On the other hand, there seems to be little doubt that the accused in these Trials were guilty of treason according to Article 58 of the Soviet Penal Code. This is the kind of law which Western legal codes abhor, because it contains a number of "blanket" clauses by which almost anything can be construed as treasonable conduct and punishable therefore by death. For instance, subversive talk and subversive plans. Personally I must

doubt whether more than a few of the accused, or of the "Generals" or other civilians who perished later, were guilty of *acts* of treason, as we consider treason. But they did discuss and consider plans to overthrow Stalin. Stalin then was, and is today, the core of the Russian State, so that opposition to him was treason, whether in word or deed. Incidentally, the Russians have never gone so far as to make "dangerous thoughts" the crime which today fills Japanese prisons. Do you see what I'm trying to say, that the accused knew thoroughly that Stalin, like Lenin before him, represented the "Party Line," the central authority of Bolshevism? They knew that, but they rebelled against him personally, because they did not like him. I do not think that they were tortured into confessions or subjected to physical pressure, but they were brought to realize that their opposition to Stalin was opposition to the Party Line, and that their conduct was thus something worse than a crime—it became a cardinal sin.

I shall speak later of the theatrical nature of the Trials. But there was another factor worth mentioning now, namely a strange sense of unreality from time to time. In trying to explain the picture

to readers in America, I referred more than once to Dostoyevsky, one of whose books, *The Possessed,* does, I think give an insight into the Russian character. It is the story of a young man who, mainly for his own entertainment, invented a fantastic story of plot and conspiracy in a small provincial Russian town. Lives were actually lost, and houses burned, in consequence. But the point of the story was that, despite this and the punishments which followed, the whole thing was largely a product of the Russian imagination, which is so vivid and dynamic that its dreams can become reality.

I have sometimes suspected, and perhaps still slightly suspect, that this kind of imagination was at work in the Soviet Trials. I may add that my allusions to Dostoyevsky found little favor in Moscow. Bukharin himself, in his death speech, remarked pointedly that any such theory was silly and old-fashioned, as Dostoyevsky and other "former intellectuals" no longer meant anything in the U.S.S.R. What is more, the censors got mad and cut my copy and said that I didn't know what I was talking about, and that to hint at the possibility of there being something imaginative,

much less fictitious, in these Trials, was a naughty trick on my part and discourteous in a guest of the Soviet Union.

There is nothing more infuriating to a foreign correspondent than to be told that he is the "guest" of a country where he works and must therefore pull his punches. American newspapermen don't think in those terms and don't like it. We are sent on our jobs as reporters to find and relate the facts as best we can. Of course we all make mistakes . . . I myself was lamentably wrong about the extent and gravity of the "man-made famine" in Russia during the fight to collectivize the farms, in 1930-33. But every reporter who is worth his salt tries always to tell the truth, and none of the good ones I've known could be swayed by threats or money, or cajolery and tricks, and when people talk to us about politeness and being guests, it makes us angry and sick. I've been wanting to say this for a long time, not only about the Russians, but about the British and French and Japanese and Argentineans and Greeks, and everywhere that American reporters have to work. Now I've said it and feel better.

I don't suppose that the Kremlin was satisfied

with the Kamenef-Zinovief Trial. The Kremlin had perhaps been a little nervous about Zinovief, who might have proved a redoubtable opponent and therefore desirable to "liquidate," but it (the Kremlin, meaning Stalin) still could scarcely believe that Kamenef and Zinovief, who had been friends and comrades of Lenin, were actually—whatever they admitted—engaged in conspiracy to murder Kirof, and Stalin himself, and the others. Stalin could not easily credit it, because the Bolsheviks, with all their hardness of realism, have never played murder as politics. They never liked and did not use political assassination. They weren't chary of human lives, but political assassination was a method Lenin condemned. He admitted, or condoned, the value of "terror killing," if absolutely necessary, but he always wrote and said that assassinations as approved and practiced by the Social Revolutionaries didn't lead anywhere, except perhaps to the scaffold.

If you have followed me thus far, I hope that you'll now understand how tangled the whole thing was, how confused and Dostoyevskyean. But that was the way it happened, and Yagoda, perhaps, was the villain of Dostoyevsky's *Possessed,*

the spider who spun his webs and caught men for fun, and his profit. Yagoda was caught himself, and that I saw and will tell, but there came after him another, named Yezhof, a bloodthirsty fanatic who slew by thousands where Yagoda had slain his dozens.

The people of the U.S.S.R., whose opinion is not to be neglected, and is not neglected, by the Kremlin, were distressed by the Trial of Kamenef, Zinovief, and company. They had no newspapers in which to express their opinion, or may not have dared to express it. But they thought that it somehow smelt queer. They could not say what they thought because "Freedom of Speech," as we know it, is not one of Russia's Freedoms; but they said it among themselves, in private and under their breath. They couldn't believe either that such formerly great Bolsheviks as Zinovief and Kamenef, whom Lenin had used and liked although he sometimes reproved them—the people of Russia could not believe that men like these were involved in the murder of Kirof. Unfortunately, they did not yet know, and the Kremlin did not know, the murk of Yagoda's mind, nor Yezhof's sadistic fervor.

The following Trial, however, that of Radek, Piatakof, Muralof, and fourteen others, in January, 1937, went further and established, according to the verdict of the Court, that the accused had organized a conspiracy "with the object of expediting an armed attack on the Soviet Union and assisting foreign aggressors to seize the territory of the Soviet Union." This is an interesting and important statement, because henceforth it may be said that the Supreme Military Tribunal assumed *as a matter of course* the connection between Opposition conspirators on Soviet soil and Nazi Germany, which more and more clearly loomed forth as the implacable foe and ultimate assailant of the U.S.S.R.

By a speech of singular dexterity, which few of us foreigners who heard it fully understood, Radek talked himself out of death, with Sokolnikof, former Commissar of Finance, and two other minor accused. But the statements of Piatakof and Muralof (both shot like the rest of the culprits) were straightforward, clear, and unmistakable, and I think that few of those who heard them, whether Russians or strangers, could doubt that their words were true. A lot of ink has been

spilled about political trials in the U.S.S.R., and the silliest assertions have been made. Hypnosis, hashish, torture—those are simple allegations, but some ingenious scribes let their imaginations fly still higher—to the mountains of Tibet, that land of mystery and distance. In Tibet, they claimed, there was a drug unknown to Western science whose properties are such that those who have consumed it become as clay in the potter's hands, to be shaped as the potter pleases.

What preposterous nonsense! No one who heard Piatakof or Muralof could doubt for a moment that what they said was true, and that they were saying it from no outer drag of force. I don't speak of Kamenef or Zinovief, because their Trial I did not see, but Piatakof and Muralof I heard and believed. Remember, please, that these were no mediocre citizens of the Soviet Union. Piatakof had a first-class mind and was a first-class executive; Muralof won Moscow for the Revolution in the hour of crisis, and had proved himself a doughty warrior for the Soviet cause. Their words rang true, and it is absurd to suggest or imagine that men like this could yield to any influence, against their own strong hearts. Why, then, it may

be asked, did they confess so freely if, as I say, they were impervious to pressure?

The answer to that must be found in the difference between Russians and Western races. Hauptmann, the German, went mute to death, biting back confession of undoubted guilt behind clenched teeth. Americans and Englishmen have lost lives for proven crime without a word let past their lips. But Russians are different. When confronted with damning facts which they can't deny they seem to find a last satisfaction in "spilling the beans," a final move towards atonement, a feeling that somehow they can square themselves, not perhaps with their judges, but with their own consciences, by telling all the truth. Why this is so I don't attempt to explain, but that it *is* so I am convinced.

This being the case, I have to ask myself why these men preferred such frank confession to the tight-lipped denials of a Hauptmann. And I revert to the suggestion that it was due to something in the Russian make-up. Trotsky, in a statement published in the *New York Times* of February 10, 1937, once poured ridicule on me as a "hypocritical psychologist of the Russian soul," or words to

that effect, and added, with more emphasis than politeness, "You lie about the Russian soul, you lie about the human soul in general." He did not, however, challenge my assertion that Piatakof's testimony, delivered with the gravity, coolness, and precision of a professor addressing his class, had made an almost irresistible impression of sincerity.

In Moscow after the Trial I was told that Ordjonikidze, the late Commissar of Heavy Industry, one of Stalin's oldest and nearest friends, went to Stalin to beg Piatakof's life. "I need him," he said, "the country needs him. I know that he is guilty of treason, but nevertheless he's the brains in our heavy industry. Surely, what he has done for us can be balanced with what he has done against us."

"No," said Stalin.

"But I need him," Ordjonikidze insisted, "and what's more, I will answer for him personally."

"No," said Stalin. "He must die."

I can't vouch for this story, although I am inclined to believe it. Anyway, if it is not factually true, it corresponds to the facts, because Piatakof *was* the brains of heavy industry, and a steel blade of executive ability in Ordjonikidze's hands. That

Stalin should refuse him pardon is to me the most vital factor in the whole affair. Stalin knew all the undercurrents of this Trial, and if he decided that Piatakof must die you cannot doubt that no extenuating circumstances could balance Piatakof's crime. Piatakof's execution and the execution of Muralof are to me the strongest proofs that they were guilty. Because I know something of what Bolsheviks mean by "comradeship," and how close are the ties that bind old revolutionaries together. Especially a man like Muralof, who had worked "underground" in Russia with Stalin as one of the earliest "laborers in the vineyard."

There is no denying that many of the ablest and best-informed foreigners in Moscow were highly skeptical about the Kremlin's claim that a widespread murder and treason plot existed, with ramifications abroad involving the Nazi Gestapo, and to a lesser degree the Secret Services of Britain and Japan. They were no less skeptical, however, three years later about the Kremlin's other claim, that the occupations of East Poland, the Baltic States, Bessarabia, and Southern Finland, were in reality measures of precaution against a danger which did in fact materialize, the danger of Nazi invasion.

This point has a vital bearing on the case I shall now discuss, the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and seven other high-ranking officers of the Red Army in June, 1937.

IV. THE EXECUTION OF THE "GENERALS"

THE SHOOTING OF Tukhachevsky and his fellow-generals in June, 1937, did more to mislead the world about the U.S.S.R. in general and about the Red Army in particular than any of the public civilian Trials. I suppose, in a way, that we reporters were to blame for not making the story clearer. But limitations of censorship and time and space—newspaper space, I mean—make life hard for the foreign correspondent, and in this case the official information was most scanty. I think, however, that some of the diplomatic corps and military attachés, who had time to compose and ponder and were able to send

their reports in sealed diplomatic pouches, might have guessed nearer the truth. Let's leave that and come to the facts.

There are three points in the "Generals" story of which the first is almost unknown, the second misunderstood, and the third unduly exploited. As follows:

1. Most of the conflict between the Kremlin and the "Generals," which led to their execution, had nothing to do with conspiracy or Trotsky or the Gestapo.
2. The "Generals" *did* dicker with the Germans.
3. The "Generals" probably discussed, possibly planned, but certainly did not attempt, a military coup d'etat.

1. *The "Generals" and the Kremlin.*

Every revolutionary regime, from Cromwell and the French to the Bolsheviks, is bound to think quick and hard about how to handle the Army. Cromwell of course was lucky, because, like Washington, he commanded the Army himself, and the Army had faith in him, and despite

civilian opposition he knew that the Army was there and his to use when he chose. The French Revolution got dreadfully tangled in trying to handle its Army, until Napoleon came and ended the Revolution, but he was a soldier too. Now Lenin was not a soldier; a small, professorial man of singular brain and heart, but nevertheless not a soldier. Long before he took power in Russia he had studied most carefully the English, French, and American Revolutions and the careers of Cromwell, Napoleon, and Washington.

Accordingly, he devised a scheme for civilian-Kremlin-Communist Party-control of the Red Army. It consisted in what he called the Political Department of the Army. The Political Department was a combination of M.I. (Military Intelligence), as the British name it, or G2 and Deuxième Bureau, as it is known to the Americans and the French—a combination of that with chaplains and Y.M.C.A. and mental and physical training. Lenin's Political Department of the Army was planned to work through and by a body of men called Commissars, who with their subordinates should really be, as Lenin intended, the means of his civil control over the Army and mili-

tary leaders. The Commissars and their subordinates were incorporated in the Army, but were appointed direct from the Kremlin and drawn from civilian Communists of politically proven worth. The scheme, like some other Russian schemes, was just a trifle Utopian—did you know that the word Utopia means Nowhere?—and, for that matter, when it was re-introduced in the Finnish war, it didn't work any too well. But that I shall come to later, and why it was re-re-introduced in the greater struggle with Germany.

The scheme worked fairly well in the Russian Civil War. It wasn't so good or so bad, but it did keep the Kremlin's control and had the practical value of checking some "doubtful" officers who weren't always wholly sure if they fought for the Reds or Whites. But after the Civil War and after the war with Poland, there came a long term of peace, and little by little, as the Russians say, the Political Department of the Red Army became part of the General Staff, instead of the Kremlin's instrument. It was the inevitable attraction of armies which all soldiers know, although few of them fully understand it; and so as the years went by, the Political Department grew aloof from the

Kremlin and civil control, and was just like G_2 in this country, a branch of the Army itself.

Here, I think, Yagoda saw an opportunity to further his own ends, and perhaps even to render service to the Kremlin's enemies abroad, with whom he later admitted he was then in treacherous contact. There was a certain degree of rivalry between the OGPU and the Army for pride of place as the Kremlin's buckler and sword, and it seems more than probable that in the winter of 1936-37 Yagoda adroitly brought the Kremlin to perceive that it had little control over the Red Army, because the Political Department had become more military than civil. The Kremlin was "conditioned" to mistrust of all and sundry. Stalin and his associates who remained in Russia after the abortive Revolution of 1905-06 had been subject to police provocation and every form of malice. They had learned to trust no one, not even their best friends or closest relatives. They were fertile soil for suspicion, which Yagoda knew how to sow. Later I shall tell how Yagoda confessed to spraying poison upon the carpet of his own office, which he was about to relinquish to Yezhof, named chief of the OGPU in his stead. I think he sprayed

poison before in the Kremlin's mind about the danger of leaving the Army free from direct civilian control.

The Army leaders were taken aback. Like all soldiers in every period and country, they resented curtailment of their own prerogatives, and had a true military dislike for civilian interference. Tukhachevsky, after all, ranked by this time as one of the leading European strategists. His books had been widely translated and studied by every General Staff. He could not fail to foresee the disadvantages of a divided authority in wartime, if the Political Department were put back into civilian hands, with its powers stemming straight from the Kremlin instead of the High Command. Indeed, there is little doubt that part of the Red Army's failure in Finland was due to this very cause.

One can easily imagine the discussion which arose and grew ever more bitter between the Kremlin and the Staff. At first long Staff reports exposing the unwisdom, from a military standpoint, of the proposed reform. A firm reply from the Kremlin insisting upon *its* standpoint, then another Staff report, and this time a more curt re-

ply. Can you guess what a chance for Yagoda to add fuel to either fire? I see the "Generals," whose loyalty had never been doubted, growing week by week more bewildered, stubborn, and angry. And Stalin more peremptory, more willing to listen to the suggestion that the resistance of the General Staff had secret unworthy motives.

We must understand his position; he had been startled and horrified by Kirof's murder, and in the two and a half years which followed had become convinced that there existed a conspiracy, at home and abroad, against himself and the Soviet regime. As discussion waxed into conflict, the Kremlin pressure increased, and the "Generals' " temper hardened, until one fine day in the spring when amongst them was voiced the fatal doubt whether Stalin and Stalin's program were not a positive menace to the defense which the Red Army was feverishly preparing against Germany or Japan or both. That doubt distilled the potion from which their deaths were brewed.

2. *The "Generals" and the Germans,* and 3. *The "Generals" and their plans.*

The "Generals" quickly saw, or knew already, that the rank and file of the Army would not support them in any move against the Kremlin. Accordingly, they began to dicker with outsiders for foreign aid. It is no secret that in the period of Russo-German friendship which followed the Treaty of Rapallo—from 1922 until the advent of Hitler—relations between the Russian and German Armies were close and cordial. German officers of all branches had served as instructors to the Red Army, and it is even said that on one occasion the German General von Hammerstein personally conducted Red Army maneuvers in the Ukraine. What could be more natural, once the "Generals" reached their decision, than to appeal to their German colleagues?

This task fell to Marshal Gamarnik, chief of the Political Department and Vice-Commissar of War, who from the outset had stood with the General Staff against the Kremlin and the OGPU. Gamarnik therefore made overtures to the Nazis to balk Stalin, as the German General von

Schleicher had earlier made overtures to the French to balk Hitler—and met Schleicher's fate. It was said afterwards that Gamarnik, acting with and for Tukhachevsky and the General Staff, had offered the Ukraine to the Nazis in return for their support in a coup d'etat against Stalin. The story went in Moscow that the Czechs or perhaps the French got wind of this offered bargain and informed the OGPU.

About that I have no sure knowledge; but Gamarnik committed suicide on May 30, and almost immediately afterwards Marshal Tukhachevsky and seven other ranking officers were arrested and summarily shot. The participation of Gamarnik seems to prove beyond doubt that the Political Department had indeed become part of the Staff, more loyal to the Army than to the Kremlin. His suicide further proves that he had been engaged in some deal with the Germans, and had learned that his game was known to the Kremlin, and therefore committed suicide in order to avoid the more shameful trial and execution which awaited Tukhachevsky and the rest.

I am sure that this must be the answer, because I cannot conceive anything less grave than a com-

pact with foreign enemies that would have caused the summary execution of such men as Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborovich, Eideman, and Putna, who had all been as brave and competent warriors of the Soviet cause as Ney, Murat, and Lannes had been in the cause of France. Remember, too, that the Bolshevik "Generals" were condemned by a court of their peers. The Supreme Military Tribunal presided over by Ulrich with two assistant judges was reinforced on this occasion by eight other high officers, including Marshal Budenny. The trial was held *in camera,* and was tragically short. The accused admitted their guilt and were shot at dawn the next day.

I was in Washington when it happened, and the Soviet Ambassador, Troyanovsky, was the first to tell me the news. He said he could scarcely believe that these men, of whom many had been his warm friends in the Civil War, were guilty of such treason, but he added that those who tried them and found them guilty of treason were also their friends and comrades, and that therefore he had no doubts in accepting the verdict of guilt. Perhaps more than any Soviet Ambassador in the brief history of the U.S.S.R., Troyanovsky en-

joyed the esteem of the country to which he was accredited. I think that I am not wrong in saying that Washington liked and respected him. I know that I did myself, and would take his word as a bond. So it all must build up to the fact that, Yagoda or no Yagoda, mistrust or no mistrust, there was indeed a conspiracy against the Kremlin and its leader. Without, maybe, treacherous action, but not without treacherous connections and treacherous plans.

The shocking thing, however, was that the trial of the "Generals" really marked the beginning of the "Purge," which I shall describe in a later chapter. To give a small foretaste of what that Purge was to mean, I may say that six of the eight high officers who condemned the "Generals" to death themselves disappeared from the scene within two and a half years. One Gorbachef, died a natural death; two, Ulrich and Budenny, survive. The remaining five were "liquidated." The Spaniards, who are a cruel people, have a proverb that "Dead men cannot bite"; and, Heaven knows, I witnessed enough quick killing in Spain to slow and chill my heart-beats. But never such mass hysteria

or frenzy of destruction as Russia showed to the world in the awful days of the Purge.

I cannot dare to portray the scenes in the Kremlin at the time of the "Generals' " trial and execution. We know that Stalin and Voroshilof had played a big personal part in the Russian Civil War, the former as a most active member of the High Military Council, and the latter as an outstanding partisan leader. They had fought side by side with the "Generals" and had counted them good men and true. Moreover, these were no political "Western exiles," talkers in European cafés, but men who had stayed and worked, like Stalin and his associates, in the dark days of Tsarist repression from 1906-14, and had fought for the Revolution on many a bitter field. Whatever doubts there may be about the guilt of other accused in other Trials, it is unthinkable that Stalin and Voroshilof and Budenny and the Court-Martial could have sentenced their friends to death unless the proofs of guilt were overwhelming. Then, too, there are other points, as follows:

(a) The suicide of Gamarnik.
(b) The accused all confessed guilt, although

their Trial was held so soon after their arrest that they could not have been subjected to the long, gruelling process of imprisonment and examination which later was said to have extracted confessions from civilian prisoners.

(c) The Trial was attended by a hundred or more representative officers of the Red Army summoned from all over the country. For them, too, the accused had been trusted colleagues or leaders. They all accepted the verdict without question.

I was not in Moscow at the time of the "Generals' " execution, but I am told that it struck the whole Soviet nation like a thunderbolt. The Red Army was held in the highest esteem, and the news that its topmost leaders had been convicted of treason was horrifying to all. People stood, I am told, in little groups, talking in hushed voices, or staring blankly at the newspapers as if they couldn't believe their eyes. But it is significant that after the first shock had passed there was nowhere any marked tendency to doubt or discredit the sentence. The same applies to the Army itself,

and the reason in both cases was the same, that the officers who attended the Trial as spectators, and the civilians present, picked men like the officers, were able to impart their certainty of the guilt of the accused to their subordinates and friends.

This perhaps is the answer to the question that has been raised abroad, why, if the "Generals" were guilty beyond cavil, did the Kremlin not make public the full story? I think, however, that there is another answer, that some of the facts must have been grave enough and far-reaching enough to involve not merely a "Palace Revolution" or coup d'etat, but the safety of the State itself. At that time, one remembers, the Spanish Civil War was raging hotly, and the Kremlin was aware that the Nazi-Fascist nations were using Spain as a guinea-pig to test and determine methods which later became the "blitzkrieg." The Franco-British governments had already displayed the lethargy, indifference, or worse, which later culminated in the great betrayal of Munich. The Kremlin must have reckoned Spain a prelude and foretaste of things to come. The Russians in Madrid had learned, perhaps even invented, a phrase the whole world would learn later, the phrase

"Fifth Column," the sinister pro-Nazi activity of traitors in the camps of Hitler's intended victims. To such culprits the Kremlin knew that no mercy could be granted.

The killing of the "Generals" had a deplorable effect upon opinion abroad, especially military opinion. This effect was no doubt enhanced and confirmed later by the Purge, which took a much higher toll of lives from the higher ranks of the Soviet combatant forces. But soldiers abroad were shocked by the sudden ruthlessness of the "Generals" affair, which undoubtedly created the belief in their minds that the loyalty and the discipline of the Red Army must have been gravely impaired. The initial failures of the Red Army during the Finnish war were considered in foreign military circles to be further proof of demoralization. This is important, because it may be taken for granted that one of the reasons—if not the chief reason—why Hitler invaded the U.S.S.R. in June, 1941, was his conviction that the Red Army was a "pushover," or anyway quite incapable of prolonged resistance.

There remains the final point—were the "Generals" guilty in deed? I suppose the answer is nega-

tive, because there was no German invasion of the Ukraine, nor any overt act of Nazi hostility. There was no coup d'etat, or attempted coup d'etat, in Moscow or any other Soviet city. Nevertheless, throughout history the preparation of conspirative action against the State, especially if made in collusion with hostile or potentially hostile foreigners, has always been considered little less serious than the action itself, and in extreme cases deserving of capital punishment. The Soviet Code, of course, leaves no doubts upon the subject, and it was by the Soviet Code that the "Generals," and civil offenders as well, were judged, condemned, and executed.

Now this may seem like dead bones, because I wasn't in Moscow when the "Generals" were tried, and if I had been there I could not have seen their Trial. Of later Trials which I did see, I can give you eyewitness description, and I think you will find it interesting, that the bones take on flesh and substance and those dead men arise and walk, as the Prophet saw in the Bible. But I revert to my original thesis, that this stuff about the Trials is not wasting your time nor mine, that it really is essential if one wishes to elucidate the "Why" of Russia today.

V. THE BUKHARIN-YAGODA TRIAL

I.

THE LAST AND greatest of the Soviet Treason Trials was held in March, 1938. It was indeed the "Trial to end all Trials," because by this time the issues were clear, the Prosecution had marshaled its facts and learned to recognize enemies, at home and abroad.

Earlier doubts and hesitations were now dispelled, because one case after another, especially, I believe, the case of the "Generals," had gradually filled in the picture which was so hazy and incomplete at the time of Kirof's murder. You will remember that Zinovief and Kamenef, although later executed, were found guiltless in the sum-

mer of 1935 of complicity in the Kirof affair. Now, almost three years later, the wheel had turned full cycle, and the formula had been found. As follows:

> The Prosecution now sought to prove that all the groups or individuals, whether soldiers or civilians, which for one reason or another, either personal or public, had been opposed to Stalin and the Kremlin's central authority—that all these varied and sometimes mutually hostile oppositions finally combined to form a single mass, animated by a single thought, which was enmity to Stalin and his regime.

From this main thesis there were developed secondary points:

(a) That the whole series of oppositions and conspiracies gradually came to revolve, like planets round the sun, about the central figure of Trotsky, whom the Kremlin, to its regret, had permitted to go abroad. By a singular paradox the Kremlin, which refuses to believe in

either God or Devil, had thus raised the person of Trotsky to almost Miltonian heights of Satanic cunning and power.

(b) That the failure of all or any of the separate or combined oppositions to obtain any considerable measure of popular support at home forced their movement, or movements, inevitably to seek foreign support, and thus run the whole gamut of treason.

(c) Finally, that Trotsky and his associates abroad were also thus compelled to feed from a foreign hand, with the truly shocking result that Trotsky, whose services to the Revolution had been magnificent and honored as such by Lenin, became in the last sad end the chief tool of his country's foes.

It was in 1929 that the Kremlin decided to get rid of Trotsky. He was sent out of the country to Turkey, where he was given harborage on the island of Prinkipo in the Bosphorus. The motives behind this act of apparent clemency were natural and reasonable. Such former opponents of the

Soviet regime as Kerensky, Martof, and Dan had been politically castrated by living outside Russia. They lost contact not only with the undercurrents of Russian life, but with the central stream itself, and became no more than voices crying in the wilderness. But Trotsky was a bird of another feather, as subsequent events proved. Moreover, he had exceptional personal charm and unique ascendancy over his associates, which later bore bitter fruit. Trotsky's supporters in Russia paid lip-service to the victorious majority, and many of them were restored to posts of high importance, but in spirit they remained loyal to their exiled leader and were ready to do his bidding when the occasion should arise.

History furnishes an apt parallel for Trotsky's case. In the latter part of the fifth century B.C., Alcibiades was the idol of Athens, equally brilliant as orator and military executive. In the struggle for power which followed the death of Pericles, Alcibiades was defeated and exiled. For a time he brooded, like Trotsky at Prinkipo. Then gradually his own ambition forced this keen and restless man back to political activity. At first he intrigued with his partisans in Athens in the hope they

might arrange some overturn which would restore him to power. When this proved vain, Alcibiades went further and made friends with Sparta, the enemy of Athens. And actually returned to power for a brief period with the aid of Spartan swords.

When the Spartans withdrew he was exiled again, and this time, still driven by harsh inner compulsion, went straight to Persia, the ancestral foe not only of Athens but of Greece. History records that he tempted the Persian satrap Tissaphenes with honeyed words. "I have friends in Athens," he said, "and in Sparta too. With your support I can win Greece for the Persian Empire. Of course nominally the country would remain autonomous, but in practice it would be another satrapy of Persia." How close was the parallel with Trotsky was shown by the Trial of Piatakof, Muralof, Radek, and others, January 23-30, 1937. These three were Trotsky's closest friends, and they said that they did his bidding. For that, two paid with their lives, and the third with ten years in prison, just as Athens showed no mercy to the dupes of Alcibiades.

I still think that the last Trial was the strangest

and most thrilling of all. To begin with, the personalities involved. Bukharin, if one may permit a comparison which has no blasphemous intent, had been the St. John of Lenin, selfless, sincere, and devoted: a popular speaker, yet gifted above others with knowledge of the philosophical foundations upon which Lenin had built. Then Rykof, like Bukharin one of Lenin's closest associates, who had succeeded him as President of the Council of Commissars. Other Commissars—or "Secretaries" as they would be called in America—such as Rosengoltz, Commissar of Foreign Trade, and Grinko, Commissar of Finance. Two leading members of the Soviet Foreign Service: Rakovsky, also close friend of Lenin, once Ambassador to Paris and London; and Krestinsky, Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

Then a number of the highest officials, Presidents and Premiers, of the various federations which compose the U.S.S.R. Next a group of doctors, leaders of their profession, who were charged with the cardinal sin against the oath of Aesculapius, that from greed or fright they had betrayed that sacred oath and caused the death of their patients by treatment they knew was wrong and

by medicine they knew was harmful. Last but not least, came the real villain of all this bloody drama, Yagoda, the former chief of the OGPU, who had been termed and perhaps had been the power behind the Kremlin, and who, it may be, had dreamed of seizing the Kremlin himself. As Trotsky had been to Lenin, so Yagoda had been to Stalin, a force of great aid and service. A man less noble than Trotsky, without half of Trotsky's intellect; but far more plastic and sly and cruel and avid and mean.

The Trial was held in the small hall of the former Nobles' Club (now called House of Soviets), a long, low room with soft dark-blue walls surmounted by a narrow blue-and-white frieze of Wedgwood pottery, with little dancing figures white on blue. The room holds about three hundred people, sitting on pew-like benches with an aisle between. They face a low stage, on which they see from left to right a small red-draped table with a water carafe and glass, where the Prosecutor and his secretary-assistant will sit. Then, a little further back, a larger table, also red-draped, with

a bell on it, backed by three high chairs. These are for the Judges.

In front of them, near what would be the footlights if this really were a theatre, a lower red table where the two court stenographers, mousy, nondescript young women, are already sitting. At the right, a sort of pen with low wooden railing, where the accused sit on four short rows of benches. In front of it, three or four chairs and a low table unexpectedly draped green, for the defense lawyers.

Although this is a court-martial, the lawyers are civilians, and may be freely selected by all or any of the accused. As a rule, not more than three or four accused had lawyers in these Trials. They probably thought it would do them no good, and it didn't. Yet the lawyers each make a speech towards the end of the proceedings on behalf of their various clients, and sometimes do intervene usefully in examination of witnesses. Nevertheless, I am afraid that one of my friends, a distinguished figure in the forensic world of the United States, was correct in saying when he read this part of my story, "From what you tell me, these defense lawyers are admitted, or introduced, in order

to give an appearance of legality to what I am forced to regard as most arbitrary proceedings." Like the secretaries, the defense lawyers are already present, fumbling with documents.

High in the background above the Judges' table is something which resembles—and indeed is—a window. It is not glass, but some dark material like opaque mosquito-netting, through which the spectators can see nothing, save the occasional lighting of a match and glow of a cigarette, although smoking is forbidden in the courtroom. Behind this screen is a small square room where one knows that Stalin and the other Kremlin leaders are present to watch and hear, seeing without being seen.

The time is now ten o'clock, the hour set for the opening session. The Prosecutor, Vishinsky, comes in quietly through the wide doorway in the left background, portfolio under arm; a short, thickset man with sparse sandy hair and pince-nez. He wears a dark business suit with a white shirt, low collar, and dark tie. He is followed by his secretary who carries more portfolios and files. They sit at the table on the left and begin arranging their papers. A moment later the Comman-

dant of the Court, a Red Army officer in khaki tunic and breeches, with high brown boots, appears in the doorway and says, "The Court is coming. Please rise."

The three Judges enter first and take their seats at the table, the President, Ulrich, in the center. They also wear khaki uniform, as this is the Supreme Military Tribunal of the U.S.S.R., and Ulrich has the rank of General. He is a stocky man in his fifties, with square bald German head and dewlaps like a bloodhound. His eyes are blue and cold under thick blond eyebrows, and his heavy white face looks hard. He is hard, too, this Ulrich, a hard judge but a just one. At least I can only say that he often will intervene to give the prisoner a chance, if it seems that the Prosecutor is trying to rush him, or that he is being flustered by murmurs in the audience. I'd hate to have him try me if I were guilty . . . and of course if I weren't guilty, or hadn't confessed to guilt, I should never appear before Ulrich, for that is the Soviet system, as I said earlier. Nevertheless, supposing that I were innocent and yet were being tried by Ulrich, I'd have more hope for my life than from some other Soviet judges.

Following the Judges enters a file of soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets, in khaki, with magenta hatband and collar-tabs like those of the Commandant, denoting the long-term-service troops (sometimes called OGPU troops or special battalions) which form the garrisons of the great cities of the U.S.S.R. Then the prisoners, in single file, watched eagerly by foreigners amongst the audience to see if any signs of "pressure" can be detected on their faces, which are pale from long confinement but otherwise normal enough. They take their places behind the railing, with the guards behind them, and the President rings his bell and declares the court is open. Then everyone sits down, save the sentries, who stand unmoving as bronze.

Now a word about the audience, which is far from the least part of the performance in the Soviet Trials. I hope that by this time I have succeeded in conveying three points about the series of Treason Trials in Russia. First, that the accused had been found guilty, and had confessed their guilt, during the preliminary examination before they were brought to trial. Second, that the Court

therefore was chiefly engaged in determining the exact degree of guilt, and in imposing penalties. Third, that the Trials were public because their principal purpose was to inform the Soviet masses of conspiracies and other evil conduct against their country and its rulers, and to show them how such crimes were discovered and checked and punished. They thus were, as the Russians called them, "demonstration processes," to explain and demonstrate to everyone how wicked sinners might be, and that the wages of sin was death. They thus served as an object lesson, not only for the loyal majority, but for any sinful minority that might contemplate misbehavior.

Accordingly the audience is chosen from what Americans would call "party henchmen" or "ward leaders," the boys and girls who will go out all over the country to expound the trial and its meaning, to say, "I was there and I heard it," and say, "I was there and I saw it," and say, "This is how it was," and say, "This was what it meant." In addition to them there is a sprinkling of foreign diplomats and a handful of foreign correspondents, and of course, as is only natural, some high

Soviet officials who are not high enough to sit in the Kremlin's inner sanctum, and a small but vigilant crew of OGPU men in civil or military garb.

In earlier days, important trials were usually held in a much larger hall in the same building, where there was room for two thousand spectators. I am not quite sure why the change to the smaller hall was decided, although it may have been that it was thought desirable to have a smaller and therefore more carefully selected audience, in view of the gravity of the Treason Trials and the former importance of the accused. And, unless I am mistaken, the authorities were not quite pleased by the way things went at what I think was the last trial to be held in the larger hall.

On that occasion the accused were mostly big Soviet technical experts charged with sabotage of enterprises under their direction, and of treasonable communications with former owners of said enterprises now resident abroad. Their leader was a certain Professor Ramsin, who had been head of the Soviet Power Trust, a man of European reputation. Ramsin made a monkey of the then Prosecutor, Krylenko, who himself was "liquidated" in the Purge. Ramsin not merely tangled the re-

doubtable Krylenko in a mass of highly technical detail, but used, I suppose deliberately, the device of making the most sweeping blanket confessions in reply to Krylenko's accusations. Every time, Ramsin would figuratively beat his breast and cry loudly, "Yes, of course I am utterly guilty! I am the worst of traitors, and alas, this was only a part of my crimes against the State. I deserve, and am willing to say it, a thousand times any penalty this Court can inflict upon me."

Then Krylenko would try to pin Ramsin down and ask, "For instance, accused, your report on the so-and-so power project—that was doubtless a case of sabotage?"

Ramsin ran his hands through his cockatoo crest of white hair, and replied with a look of surprise, "I fear I can hardly say that; because, you see, that report was printed in the German technical press as the best thing of its kind in the past ten years, and if I may say so, as a tribute to the remarkable advance of Soviet engineering." Then, talking like a professor to a somewhat backward pupil, Ramsin proved with a mass of facts and figures how good his report had been.

Krylenko tried again. "But your scheme for the thermal furnace—you admit sabotage in that?"

Ramsin looked still more pained. "I'm sorry," he said, "but that furnace . . . I know of course it was costly . . . but the Leningrad Academy of Science awarded me a gold medal for that scheme; and I learned just before my . . . er . . . arrest, that ten more furnaces will be built according to my specifications." Then once more he gave chapter and verse with bewildering fluency and detail.

It happened again and again, until Krylenko was white with fury; and the audience, who were quick to catch on to the game, could hardly refrain from laughter.

Ramsin saved his valuable life, and the lives of most of his friends. He received a term of imprisonment, but I was told on good authority that he was back at work again, in relatively comfortable circumstances, within a week of the trial. That kind of thing happens in Russia, and there is reason to believe that Karl Radek, for instance, who also got a heavy prison sentence, has been "serving" it in a villa near Moscow, under surveillance, it is true, but doing his regular work of reading the foreign press and making reports on it for the

Kremlin, and even, it is said, of writing occasional (unsigned) articles for Moscow newspapers.

The Ramsin case illustrates a point which has always struck me greatly about the big Soviet Trials, their theatrical quality. This factor is always present, and has probably contributed no little to mistrust of the genuineness of the Trials in the minds of foreign observers. The truth of the matter is that the Russians are the most theatrical (in the good sense of the word) nation on earth. They have theatre in their blood, and of all arts it is the one in which they most, and most readily, excel. There is no *bad* theatre in Russia, only good and better and best. To me, who am not a theatre fan, the Moscow Trials were most sheer and passionate drama, because I knew, and the audience knew, and the actors knew best of all, that these Hamlets died but once, that after the curtain dropped on their last great scene there was no rushing off to supper, no excited early awakening to read what the critics have said. The curtain to them meant death at dawn in a narrow courtyard, with rifles leveled like lances, and the roar of a truck's exhaust to drown the noise of the shots.

2.

The Bukharin-Yagoda-Rykof Trial brought out the full interpretation which the Kremlin had now reached, and doubtless wished to *demonstrate* to the people of the U.S.S.R. and to the world beyond, of the whole chain of events linked with the murder of Kirof. The Kremlin's thesis was that not only all the plots were one plot, all the oppositions one Opposition, but also that the whole business was connected with, and directed by, hostile forces abroad. As the Prosecutor expressed it in his final speech:

> "The bloc of Trotskyites now in the dock is only one of the advance detachments of the Nazi-Fascist provocateurs and war incendiaries. Under the leadership of Trotsky and of the German, Japanese, and other intelligence services, this gang of bandits was working to help the Nazi-Fascist governments to overthrow the Soviet government and to restore the power of the capitalists and landlords."

If such was the Kremlin's purpose, the conclusion can hardly be avoided that it did not succeed

abroad, and succeeded too well at home. Almost without exception foreign public opinion received the Trials with skepticism and disgust, and their effect upon Soviet prestige and reputation was deplorable, to put it mildly. Internally, it is my opinion that the effect was yet more grievous, because the Trials taught the Soviet public to believe that the very men, soldiers and civilians, whom they had most respected and admired, were dastardly scoundrels and traitors. The public mind was thus "conditioned" to the highest degree of suspicion-phobia, and was ripe for the thought that a traitor might be hiding under every bed. So the Trials contributed greatly to produce the excesses of the Purge.

In this last Trial of all, which seemed so well-rehearsed and complete, so balanced to settle everything, there were signs that a virus of frenzy was working in the nation's blood. Side by side with solid and not unconvincing testimony, there were passages so strange and horrible that looking back I find it hard to believe that my ears did hear the words I not only heard, but which are printed in the official stenographic record that lies

on my desk as I write now. Two instances in particular:

> The Case of the Eminent Doctors who murdered the Prominent Writer;
>
> The Case of the OGPU Chief who "poison-flitted" his Successor.

Not Edgar Allan Poe nor Lewis Carroll nor the wildest of modern crime-writers ever penned more fantastic stuff.

One day in New York I was talking with Alexander Woollcott about the Hauptmann trial, which he had just been attending. Alec said that he was sure that Hauptmann was guilty. Perhaps not the only guilty one, that he might have had an accomplice, but that he was undoubtedly guilty. Mr. Woollcott proved his point with eloquence and skill, then said, "What do you think, Walter? Don't you see that the fellow was guilty?"

I replied, "No doubt he was guilty, you've presented a damning case. The only thing that I feel is that somehow it's just *too* damning. Let me tell you what I mean, in terms of the Soviet Trials. It's just too good to be true. If you have 70 per

cent evidence of guilt, then the jury agrees and they hang him, or burn him with electricity, or stifle him with gas, or cut his head off with an axe, according to countries and laws. But the thing that makes me wonder and pause, and doubt, too, is when the evidence is not 70 but 120—then I say, I smell a rat."

Before Mr. Woollcott could speak, I hurriedly continued, "You see what I mean: that there was *too much* evidence against Hauptmann—it was all too much to be true. You've seen the show and I haven't, but I've seen all the Russian shows, where they did the same sort of thing. They overproved their case. It's like these German and Russian elections. When you get a 60 or 70 per cent vote in favor of Mr. Roosevelt, you say—even the Republicans say—'Well, that's that, the majority favors Roosevelt.' That sounds fair enough to me. But when you have 99.9 per cent endorsing Hitler or Stalin, my nostrils twitch like a rabbit's. And when, as happened in Russia with some enthusiastic wards, they got 102 per cent who voted the Stalin ticket, I really did smell a rat. You know that I like my Russians and will even forgive them arson, which, as you may know, is their favorite

form of crime, but 102 per cent—the rat is right out of the bag. When a case is overproved and evidence overplayed, I feel that it indicates weakness on the part of the Prosecution."

Take, for instance, the thing I have mentioned, the Case of the Eminent Doctors. Two highly distinguished physicians, Professors Levin and Pletnef, were charged with the murder of their patient, Maxim Gorky, the well-known writer, and, for good measure, of his son, Maxim Peshkof. Gorky's secretary, Kruchkof, who sat in the dock beside them, was said to have been their accomplice in both crimes. All three admitted their guilt with almost superfluous detail, as the Prosecutor pressed them step by step and word by word. At the time I couldn't for the life of me understand the purpose of this play, which seemed without rhyme or reason. The Prosecutor, Vishinsky, made a loud hullabaloo about Gorky's prominence as a writer and his intimate friendship with Stalin. Well, Gorky ranks high enough, but not in a class with Tolstoy, or Thomas Mann today, and as for his friendship with Stalin . . . I can fathom the point of it now, on re-reading the record. What the Doctors and Kruchkof confessed was that they

had caused Gorky's death at the bidding of Yagoda, because Yagoda feared or was jealous of Gorky's influence with Stalin. In short, they were there to help blacken Yagoda's character, which seemed unnecessary.

The facts of the case, however, were, as everyone knew, that Gorky had only half a lung as a result of earlier tuberculosis, that he was approaching seventy and couldn't live much longer, and that his doctors had told him repeatedly that he couldn't stand a cold climate, so he lived for years in Sorrento, Italy. Then one day he came back to Russia, and died there, as might be expected, of pneumonia. Of course it was all worked out, that Levin persuaded Gorky to return to Moscow from the Crimea because Gorky's grandchildren had grippe, so that Gorky should also catch grippe. Then when Gorky caught grippe, Levin did something or other, or failed to do it, which induced pneumonia. Then he gave Gorky the wrong kind of stimulant, or failed to give him a stimulant, so Gorky died, and Levin, they said, had killed him.

It didn't sound right to me, but here was this poor Levin admitting it word by word, with Pletnef and Kruchkof confirming him, and all three of

them admitting as well that they'd induced pneumonia for Gorky's son, some time sooner, by giving him lots of vodka, of which it seems he was fond, and letting him sleep it off on a bench in the garden with his coat off, so he caught pneumonia too. Then they treated *him* wrong, and he died. It was all so preposterous that one might almost suppose that it was brought in as comic relief, except that it proved no joking matter for any of the three, because Levin and Kruchkof were shot and Pletnef got twenty-five years. I think that it must be true that they wanted to blacken Yagoda, but I fear it is also true that over this strange affair hung the shadow of mass hysteria.

That unhappy Professor Levin. He admitted this and that, but he might have saved his life had he not said in one thoughtless moment, "I have the highest regard and esteem for Maxim Gorky, whose death was a loss to the world." And the Prosecutor snapped back, "But you said that you murdered Gorky . . ."

There came then a sound from the audience, a sort of low growling noise, so that Ulrich, presiding Judge, rang his bell and called for silence. I myself am not a Russian and cannot think as they

do, but in this case I felt clearly enough that the audience just couldn't bear Levin's saying in almost the same sentence that Gorky was a wonderful person and his death was a loss to humanity, and that he had murdered him. I don't for a moment believe that Levin had murdered him. I thought this part of the Trial was nonsense, and think so still; but nevertheless it is sure that Professor Levin dug his grave with those two sentences. And was shot.

The case of Professor Kazakof was even more outlandish. He was the kind of doctor whom other doctors dislike: he had new smart methods which made other doctors say "quack." His particular specialty was a compound he called "Lysati," a mixture of hormones or gland extracts or what have you, which he claimed would revive the dead, or thereabouts. There had been much controversy on the subject in Soviet medical journals, and even the public press, with Kazakof fighting a lone but not losing battle against what he termed the typical reactionism of the medical profession. If you are interested in such things you may recall the case of Professor Koch, with his "tuberculin," which proved a flop, and its failure broke Koch's

heart. Or the other case of Ehrlich, with "606," the salvarsan treatment of syphilis, which did *not* prove a flop, and made Ehrlich famous for ever. In both these instances the medical profession was skeptical at first. One worked and the other didn't, but I fear the world will never know the merits or demerits of Kazakof's "Lysati," because the sentence upon him read as follows:

"Kazakof, Ignati Nikolayevich, to be shot, with the confiscation of all his personal property."

This means that his studies and archives and formulae, and so forth, passed into the hands of the OGPU, which has interests it believes transcend any medical research.

Kazakof was accused of murdering Yagoda's predecessor as head of the OGPU, Minjinsky. To me this was somewhat surprising, because I happen to know that Minjinsky, who had been badly crippled by an automobile accident in Poland in 1920, and had grave maladies in addition, had always ascribed his continuance in life to Professor Kazakof and the "Lysati." Like most chronic invalids, Minjinsky had his pet doctor and pet remedy, namely Kazakof and the "Lysati," and told Stalin so and all his friends. You can see the way he said

it, the way we now talk about vitamins. You can hear him talking to Stalin, and saying, "Comrade Stalin, I hear you've been having some heart trouble. What you really need is these 'Lysati' that Kazakof's been giving me. I mean, my friend, that they're wonderful, and in fact I don't mind telling you, they're keeping me alive." That was what Minjinsky said; but one day Minjinsky died, and Yagoda, his right-hand man, ruled the OGPU in his stead. Time passed, and Yagoda fell and himself was brought to trial. And with him, as a makeweight, was the unhappy Professor Kazakof.

The Prosecutor, Vishinsky, brought Kazakof to admit that he had deliberately contrived the death of Minjinsky, at Yagoda's bidding, because Yagoda wanted the job, by giving him wrong doses, or hyper-doses, or under-doses, or anything you like, of "Lysati." It sounded like bunkum to me, but anyway that's what Kazakof said and admitted.

Then Vishinsky turned to Yagoda, and asked him, "Is it true that you gave Kazakof instructions to murder your chief, Minjinsky, in order that you might take his place and use it for conspiratorial purposes?"

Yagoda said quietly, "I never saw Professor Kazakof until this day."

Vishinsky went back to Kazakof and drew from him the statement that on the sixth of November, 1933, an OGPU car had called for him at his home by Yagoda's orders, and taken him to the first entrance of the OGPU headquarters in Moscow, and there he'd been led upstairs to Yagoda's office. Where Yagoda had told him, said Kazakof, "Minjinsky's a living corpse, why don't you finish him off? I want his job for myself. So finish him off, or else. . . ."

"You mean, then," said the Prosecutor, "that Yagoda frightened you into committing the shocking crime of the murder of Minjinsky?"

"That is what I mean," said Kazakof, "because Yagoda was so powerful and . . ."

At this point the audience shuddered. I felt them shudder, and shuddered myself, because I knew and they knew what power Yagoda had wielded, as head of the OGPU, Lord of the High Justice and the Low, the most dreaded and terrible man since Torquemada of Spain. Except, of course, Yezhof, who slew Yagoda the Slayer, and

later himself was slain. Then Vishinsky turned to Yagoda and said:

"Accused Yagoda, do you deny or confirm the statement of Professor Kazakof?"

Yagoda said, "I deny."

Vishinsky persisted: "So Kazakof is lying?"

"Yes, lying," said Yagoda.

"And Levin," Vishinsky continued, "did he lie too when he said that you had ordered him to kill Maxim Gorky, Stalin's friend?"

"He is lying," said Yagoda.

Vishinsky pointed a finger at him. I still can see this scene, so vivid it lives in my mind. The audience hushed and tense, and Ulrich, the bloodhound with dewlaps, watching coldly, and the podgy Vishinsky pointing his finger at Yagoda, a pallid man with dark hair and harsh eyes.

Vishinsky said, "Did you not lie too, Yagoda?"

At that point Yagoda bit. You might say that he bit off the finger; you might say that he bit off the hand; that he bit off Vishinsky's arm. In a voice that was menace of death, he said:

"Don't dare to ask me that question! That question I shall not answer."

He spoke with such concentrated venom and

fury and threat of hell and damnation, that Vishinsky jumped in the air. I don't mean he really jumped, but somehow we felt that he'd jumped. And didn't the audience jump! Good Lord, how all of us jumped!

My friends often ask me why I don't go to theatres and movies and so forth. And here is my answer now: that I have seen something bigger and better. I told Noel Coward that once, when he was grumbling at me because I didn't know enough to satisfy his interest about some show at the Russian Art Theatre. I said, "Yes, of course, and I'm sorry: I ought to have seen it and didn't. But you know, I saw the Trials, and they were so much better theatre and so much more exciting, that even Moskvin or Kachalof were dull to me by comparison."

Yagoda's tone of fury and venom—far, far more his tone than his words—knocked Vishinsky off his feet, and knocked the audience too. Myself, I was sitting close to the "stage," in the second row of benches, and thus received the full impact. But I'm a reporter, and a philosopher as well, and have

seen and heard horror and flames. And known pain to its uttermost limit.

But the people behind me were hit, and there came through them the sort of thing you don't often hear, a gasp of dismay and terror. No, not just terror and dismay, perhaps it was simply distress, as when the bullet hits a strong young soldier charging with fixed bayonet.

The President, General Ulrich, hard old bloodhound, rang his bell and said to Yagoda, "You don't have to talk like that, I won't let you talk like that."

Up to now I have been quoting from the official stenographic record of this Trial, but the lines which follow were not included therein. I heard them, though, and remember.

Yagoda looked at Ulrich, the rat that looked at the Judge. And said:

"That goes for you too—you can drive me, but not too far! I'll say what I want to say . . . but . . . do not drive me too far!"

Talk about cold shivers!

I've seen the redoubtable Ulrich in more than one of these Trials, but this time he met his match. He knew that Yagoda was done, like a rocket

whose flare was out. Oh yes, General Ulrich knew that, and so did the audience, and so did I, and so did the Prosecutor, Vishinsky. Oh yes, we all of us knew it, and some of us were soft and some of us were tough, and some like me were philosophers and reporters, and some were just folks. But I assure you that this sentence from Yagoda was the most thrilling thing I have ever met in a wide and exciting life. It hit Ulrich himself in his big high President's chair, socked him hard like a crack on the chin.

I tell you that it is not without reason that men like Yagoda or Hitler rise to great heights of power. They must have an inner strength. They must have something we haven't. So here was this cornered rat, who knew he was doomed and knew it. The Judge knew it, the Prosecutor knew it, everyone knew it. And yet from the strength within him he could use a few simple words like a sword of lambent fire, and honestly, for a second, make all of them shake in their boots. Especially the plump Vishinsky, who took no more cracks at Yagoda. Even Ulrich was careful after that. When Yagoda flung his thunderbolt, Ulrich blinked a bit, as we all did, but he is tough Bolshevik

timber, like the boys who are holding the Germans. He blinked and then rang his bell and said, "Silence: the Prosecutor will continue the examination of Kazakof."

So quietly ended one of the highest moments of interest in my life, which has been diligently passed in search of moments of interest. Yagoda, I say and maintain, was in that moment terrific. Yet the next day he confessed to something which seemed to me purely ridiculous. This demon who had startled the Court with his sudden blaze of wrath now came before it to tell the most childish of stories. About "flitting" Yezhof to death.

One cold evening in the fall of 1937, the Kremlin caught up with Yagoda. You can imagine Stalin sitting there with Zdanof, who had taken Kirof's place as political boss of Leningrad. Stalin drums his fingers on the table and says, "What about Yagoda?"

Zdanof, a stocky, youngish citizen, looked hard at his chief, but said nothing for several seconds. It was not an easy game, as he knew, but he meant to play it. Zdanof didn't like Yagoda, and always had mistrusted the role of the OGPU in the Kirof

affair. He looked hard at Stalin, and said, "I have made a report, here it is. Not long, you can read it in ten minutes, here it is, my report about Yagoda."

Stalin read the report and frowned. "This . . . is . . . dynamite . . ." he said slowly, "but I believe it. Yagoda has done good work, but now he becomes a danger."

Was Yagoda arrested that night? I still cannot answer that question, because I received two conflicting accounts, one dramatic, the other prosaic, from sources I judged to be equally well informed. That is one of the greatest difficulties of reporting in Russia, you hear such vivid stories, told by people who ought to know, with a wealth of graphic detail, and the little items and touches which you'd think could never be invented; and yet these stories are fictions, although the narrator has come to believe what he says.

After twenty years' experience I have made it a rule to believe little of what I hear in Moscow, only part of what I read, and not even all that I see. I never can forget that I saw with my own eyes, and two thousand others saw with me, the departure of Trotsky under guard from the Kazan

Station in Moscow, when he was exiled to Central Asia. I saw him, we all saw him; the erect, familiar figure with fur cap pulled low on his forehead and heavy scarf round his neck—it was winter and bitterly cold—walking with quick short steps past the file of guards to the entrance of the sleeping-car. He was followed by three or four other civilians, doubtless secretaries or members of his family. There was little or no demonstration, a few cries of sympathy or derision, then someone struck up the "Internationale" in which all joined, and it was over. The crowd went quietly home, and I rushed back to my office, in great glee because I was the only American reporter present, to write my piece. And wrote it, and got it passed by the censor. But NONE OF IT WAS TRUE, as I found out two days later. They'd shown us a bogus Trotsky, for some reason best known to themselves. The real Trotsky and his companions were taken by automobile to a suburban station and there put on the train. Which perhaps will explain my doubts regarding Yagoda's arrest.

The first story I heard about it should be written presumably as follows: Reader, do not forget

that Yagoda controlled the OGPU forces of Moscow, the troops with magenta hatbands, the long-term-service garrison. Not an easy man to arrest, and nimble as any rat. So what they did was to send a platoon of youngsters from the Kremlin Military Academy for him. Yagoda lived in the Kremlin, so now you can see how it happened. Stalin's mind is set; Yagoda, he knows, is a danger. He takes the telephone and rings the Kremlin Military Academy—the Kremlin is a walled citadel a mile and a half in circumference.

"I want the Comrade Commander . . . is that you? This is Stalin speaking. Send ten of your boys right now to Yagoda's apartment, to arrest him and hold him fast. Pick boys you can trust, you know, and tell them to shoot if need be. . . ."

Can't you hear the gasp of surprise at the other end of the line? Yagoda, Yagoda arrested, Yagoda the Chief of the OGPU. . . .

That must have been how they did it, using tough young fearless kids who didn't know nor care. Like the ones that take their planes and dive at the Stuka bombers, all hot and reckless of self, to blast and kill them.

So they took Yagoda that night, and a few days

later there was a small announcement in *Pravda* and other Moscow newspapers that Yagoda, Genrikh Grigorievich (which means Henry, son of Gregory, as Russians use G for H, and talk about Goover, Gughes, and Garriman), had been replaced as head of the OGPU by Comrade Yezhof. There was no "Comrade" for Yagoda, and that was a certain tip-off for the foreign reporters. When a man's in good standing in Moscow, he's always described as Comrade, but when they leave Comrade out it means that he's on the toboggan.

This version of the arrest sounds plausible, but the chief objection to it is that Yagoda must have had a day or two of warning, before his arrest, in order to do something which I shall shortly describe. Of course it's always possible that he sensed what was coming and acted accordingly, but I cannot think that he would have waited quietly for arrest if he had seen it coming. So all things considered, I believe that my second version is the true one, as follows: Stalin *did* decide to remove Yagoda, and it *was* at Zdanof's suggestion. But, you see when you talk about Russia, you don't realize that the answer to the puzzle is the Com-

munist Party, of which Stalin is the head, and its terrific discipline. They use the word "monolithic," and a fine, fat word it is. Here you have, if you want, the secret, the secret of Stalin's success and the secret of Hitler's setbacks, the ironclad rigid discipline of the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R., which could and did overcome the knavery of traitors and the madness of the Purge.

Stalin had no need to use daring boys on Yagoda. Instead, he sent a curt message that the Kremlin had decided that the Commissar of the Interior, that is, Chief of the OGPU, would henceforth be Yezhof, not Yagoda, and Yagoda must move out in twenty-four hours.

Yagoda knew what that meant, but he was powerless, just as the "Generals" were powerless, against the Kremlin, which is the symbol and center of the Party's will. Yagoda had twenty-four hours, and used them in a way you can't guess. I wouldn't believe it myself unless I had heard it stated, and have it here down in the record, the official stenographic record of Yagoda's Trial. You cannot guess what he did. He summoned a chemist, whose name is unimportant, and told him to concoct a liquid containing mer-

cury in thoroughly lethal degree. Then he and Bulanof, his personal secretary, who was going to share his toboggan, and shared his fate in the Trial, got a flit-gun, and "flitted" their own office with the thoroughly lethal concoction. They flitted the chairs and the table, they flitted the curtains and carpets, they flitted the whole room. Can't you see them flitting away—perhaps they even had two flit-guns, just flitting and flitting and flitting.

I still can't believe my eyes as I read this astounding tale, but I heard Yagoda tell it and heard Bulanof confirm it, and heard that solemn, painstaking Prosecutor, Vishinsky, inform the Court and the countless millions of the Soviet nation, and the rest of the world, if it listened, that this nefarious flitting had gravely affected the health of Comrade Yezhof. Who himself was shot two years later, which cured him of mercury poisoning. I mean, any child must have known . . . I mean, if Dostoyevsky could have seen from his grave . . . I mean, Reader, please understand—I hope with sympathy—why it was not always easy to report the U.S.S.R. in an intelligent and intelligible manner.

After this bizarre interlude, Bukharin's "last words" were a refreshing and salutary attempt to make sense in the midst of confusion. He refuted the more extravagant charges against him—participation in murder, spying, and sabotage—and denied that the accused were a bloc in the sense that the Prosecution claimed. He said this was absurd, because he'd never even met some of his fellow-prisoners until the Trial began. He added that he had been subjected to no pressure of any kind, and claimed that he did not look nor talk like a man who had been drugged or hypnotized. This he proceeded to demonstrate in a speech of such clarity and brilliance that the American Ambassador Joseph Davies, who has had wide legal experience, declared it was the best he ever heard in any court.

"What's more," said the Ambassador, "Bukharin put the case for the Prosecution far more strongly and logically than Vishinsky himself." This view was shared by many who heard Bukharin describe the gradual progress of his opposition to the Kremlin, from the first incipient doubts to the ultimate treason plot. We noted, however, that he was careful to maintain the dis-

tinction between treasonable thought or talk and treasonable deed. He concluded with three remarkable statements (I quote the official record):

> "The extreme gravity of the crime I committed is obvious, the political responsibility immense, the legal responsibility such that it will justify the severest sentence. The severest sentence will be justified because a man deserves to be shot ten times over for such crimes. This I admit quite categorically and without any hesitation at all.
>
> "I refute the accusation of having plotted against the life of Lenin, but my counter-revolutionary confederates, and I at their head, endeavored to murder Lenin's cause, which is being carried on with such tremendous success by Stalin. The logic of this struggle led us step by step into the blackest quagmire, and it has once more been proved that departure from the position of Bolshevism means siding with counter-revolutionary banditism. That banditism has now been smashed. We have been smashed, and we repent our frightful crimes.

"The point is not this repentance, or my personal repentance. The Court can pass its verdict without it. The confession of the accused is not essential. The confession of the accused is a medieval principle of jurisprudence. But here we also have the internal demolition of the forces of counter-revolution. I feel it my duty to say that in the combination of forces which went to make up the counter-revolutionary tactics, Trotsky was the principal motive force. I may infer that Trotsky and others will endeavor to defend us, especially myself. I reject this defense, because I am kneeling before the Court, before the Party, before the whole people. The monstrousness of my crimes is immeasurable."

An editorial writer in the *London Times,* for which I covered this Trial, pointed out a curious parallel between the Soviet Trials, especially in the case of Bukharin, and the treason trials of England in the Middle Ages. He cited the case of the Earl of Essex, who was executed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth on a charge of high treason

which lay chiefly in the fact that he was indiscreet enough to write a letter of sympathy to Mary Queen of Scots, then imprisoned and also executed later. Nevertheless, in his last words Essex cried: "I am the most vilest of men, and had I a hundred lives, they all deserve to be sacrificed as punishment for my crime against God and Her Sovereign Majesty the Queen."

The editorial continued that in medieval England the accused was brought, not necessarily by torture, to a conviction not only of guilt but of sin. The *Times* said acutely that once this "conviction of sin" was established in the mind of a believer (who might have been a backslider but still was a believer), he was psychologically compelled to feel and admit that having sinned in one thing he had sinned in every thing. It was a subtle piece of English journalism, because the implication was that the U.S.S.R. was still far back in the Dark Ages, not to mention the hint of torture; but as an explanation of the Trials and the amazing confessions they produced, I think it comes near the truth. From Zinovief to Bukharin, they all felt that they had sinned against the Party Line and the Kremlin, just as the Earl

of Essex abased himself before God and Queen Elizabeth.

It all is a logical process; the Bukharin-Yagoda Trial was the prelude to the Purge, and I say that, without the Purge, Hitler would never have dared to attack the U.S.S.R. His attack may have changed the world's fate, may bring him to downfall and suicide, but I doubt that it would have occurred had Hitler not felt sure that Russia was easy to take.

Think, too, of what this Trial tells about the Russian character, how marked is their difference from us, and how otherwise their minds work. Honestly, it really is right, this, and I really am showing you Russia, far better than if I wrote ten thick books of facts and statistics.

It's like the old argument about what is "news," which all reporters discuss. I say, "news" need not be new—look at Tutankhamen. I say "news" is anything which interests a good reporter, and which a good reporter thinks will interest his readers. If he's wrong, the answer is that he is *not* a good reporter. Well, I *am* a good reporter, although I've been smacked on the nose

by the greatest of managing editors, Carr van Anda, more times than I like to think. Which shows that I'm not so good, because van Anda was always right. Incredibly, awfully right, like a god, an invisible king.

One time during the last war I picked up a swell air story about an exciting dogfight, with new and unusual angles. I had it all to myself, and it wasn't "spot news" as they say, because it had happened some days before. My orders at that time were to send everything PQ (that's the French cable company) triple-urgent from French Headquarters, at the not unimportant cost of eighty-one cents per word. (Of course, though I didn't know it, the *Times* was syndicating my stuff, thus covering most of the cost, and advertising it as news red-hot from the battlefield, by the most expensive route, because ordinary press rate took twenty-four hours in those days, while PQ triple-urgent hit New York in an hour from France.) Anyway, I had an exclusive story, which wasn't spot news, and not unnaturally thought I might send it by Western Union press rate at a cost of five cents per word. In two days I received a cable from van Anda: WHY YOUR EXCELLENT AIR-FIGHT

STORY TRANSMITTED WESTUNION INSTEAD PQ TRIPLE URGENT AS INSTRUCTED.

You see what a fair man he was. He called it an "excellent" story, although he was going to scalp me. I replied, alas so naïvely: STORY EXCLUSIVE NOT SPOT NEWS THOUGHT SAVE MONEY. To which van Anda retorted: OUR BUSINESS CONSIDER MONEY YOURS OBEY INSTRUCTIONS. And that, as they say, was that.

I have drifted away from my subject, though I still think that story is worth telling, but what I was trying to say is that these Trials are "news," to write about and to read. They do give the key to the problem. All my life I've been searching for keys, and one day I shall write a book, I hope I shall write it soon, called "Search for a Key." The key of course is happiness, the Greeks found that one out, and no one in human intelligence has ever equaled the Greeks. They were tops and absolute tops, the citizens of Athens, in sculpture and in theatre. Above all they were tops in philosophy, the pursuit of the ultimate wisdom, which may, although I don't know, be the highest form of happiness. Or perhaps, as they said themselves,

the only key is death, to sleep and not to dream. Socrates said that, as did Shakespeare. Socrates said (and I know it by horrid experience) that the greatest of all pleasure is release from pain. And rest for a weary head, to lay your head down on a pillow and sleep and sleep and not dream.

But while you are living you live, and I think that life is fun. I think it is fun to search and to try to find things out. And to match my guess against others, to think I am right, not they. Which is why I have written so much about the Treason Trials.

VI. THE GREAT PURGE

THE PURGE—IN Russian "Chistka" (cleansing)—is a long-standing institution of the Russian Communist Party. The first one I encountered was in 1921, shortly after Lenin had introduced "NEP," his New Economic Policy, which involved a temporary restoration of private trade and petty capitalism and caused much heartburning amongst his followers. In that Purge nearly one-third of the total membership of the Party was expelled or placed on probation. To the best of my recollection, the reasons then put forward for expulsion or probation were graft, greed, personal ambition, and "conduct unbecoming

to Communists," which generally meant wine, women and song. But there was too large a proportion of "Comrades" found wanting on ideological grounds, that is, ignorance of Marxist dogma and doctrine. There were, I remember, far more suspensions than expulsions, because, as Stalin once said to Kamenef and Zinovief during their brief period of alliance with him against Trotsky in 1925 or '26, when they wanted to have Trotsky expelled from the Party: "For a Communist, expulsion from the Party is as bad or worse than death. A weapon you should not lightly use lest it turn against yourselves." Prophetic words.

Stalin has been widely attacked by political adversaries, Russian and foreign, as a cruel and heartless man, but in point of fact he was remarkably long-suffering in his treatment of the various oppositions. This statement may sound surprising, but it is true, as the record shows. The Kremlin's struggle with Oppositionists began before Lenin's death, and again and again one or another of the Opposition leaders admitted his faults and beat his breast and cried "Mea maxima culpa," and the Kremlin forgave him. I say this is all on record, whatever the Trotskyists may claim. Until

the murder of Kirof, which hardened Stalin's steel into knives for his enemies' throats.

Kirof's murder brought a change, but even so the Purge that was held that winter was at first not strikingly different from earlier Purges. There was an unusually strict verification of Party tickets, which seemed to indicate a fear of wolves in sheep's clothing, or, as would now be said, of "Fifth Columnists." This Purge was never wholly discontinued, and as I have tried to show, it gradually developed into "*The* Purge" which you have read of, a state of mass hysteria fanned and maddened by the gnome-like Yezhof, who later perished himself in the fire which he had lighted. For two years terror, hatred, and greed ran rife across hapless Russia in an orgy of slander and denunciation, when sons sent their fathers to death and wives destroyed their husbands.

The stories afterwards published in Moscow newspapers were almost incredible. The paramount factor was fear. Few adults have an unstained conscience, and Russians are fluent in speech. Each man or woman who remembered rash, foolish words and began to shiver uneasily, decided to play safe by denouncing somebody else.

Some boasted that they could count their total of denunciations by hundreds. Then there was greed as well. One covets his neighbor's wife, or his job, or his apartment; it is easy to send an anonymous note to the OGPU. There was hatred—you had an enemy. You sent a note to the OGPU, and the enemy disappeared.

As I said, the Purge had begun just after the murder of Kirof, but it only hit its full stride when Yezhof succeeded Yagoda, in the fall of 1937. From then for a year and a half it raged like a prairie fire across the Russian steppes and gathered force as it went. Perhaps after all Yezhof's brain was indeed affected by the poison Yagoda had spread; or, more likely, the need to seek and destroy in the ranks of the OGPU itself every vestige of Yagodism produced such a feeling of insecurity and dismay that all sense and measure were lost.

I was only in Russia intermittently during that period, but each time that I returned the atmosphere of terror and suspicion was more stifling and unbearable. Russian friends whom I had known for years, men of unimpeachable standing, avoided me like the plague, or, worse still, just disappeared. That was the dreadful part, that in only

a fraction of cases were there any public announcements. Men and women disappeared . . . and no one knew. Sometimes, but not always, their closest relatives would receive a summons from the OGPU "to remove the personal effects of Citizen So-and-so"—they knew what that meant—but more commonly there was silence. Any relationship with foreigners, any foreigners, appears to have been one of the commonest grounds for "disappearance."

I should say that nine-tenths of the Russians who went to diplomatic parties, even in an official capacity, or were intimate with foreign correspondents, thus vanished. The Press Department of the Foreign Office was purged from top to bottom, and we are sure that two of the censors whom we'd known and liked for years were shot. We suspect others shared the same fate. The Soviet Diplomatic Corps suffered terribly. At least 75 per cent of its higher personnel disappeared, and most of them were known to have been shot. Of the Soviet Ambassadors and Ministers abroad in the summer of 1937, I think that only one, Ivan Maisky in London, still holds his post. Troyanovsky, the Ambassador in Washington, survived and

now lives in Moscow, but he lost his job because, I was told, his wife had once signed a resolution in favor of Trotsky's program, in 1924, when such things were correct and permitted.

The most devastating factor was the way that suspicion extended. It became a regular thing that when any man of importance "disappeared" his subordinates and friends and relatives fell also under the ban. Whole departments in every branch of national life were sometimes emptied from top to bottom; even office boys and scrub-women met sudden dismissal after their chief's removal. Of course, in cases like this the people were not arrested, although generally if they were Communists they were expelled or suspended from the Party.

But the loss of a job, with a black mark against your name, is no joke in the U.S.S.R., not to mention the terrific disorganization of business which ensued. Things got so bad that if you telephoned to some office asking for someone who as it happened had been purged, they'd often reply that they'd never heard of him, that no such citizen had even been employed there at all. This occurred to me several times, in the case of men who

only a month before had held important posts.

On account of the secrecy it is most difficult to estimate the "casualties" of the Purge, but I should think that fully half a million persons were exiled from their homes in circumstances of distress and humiliation. The number of those executed is also quite uncertain, but one of my colleagues kept a "score sheet" of death sentences published in Moscow and provincial newspapers, which reached over two thousand in eighteen months. We reckoned that this would be about one-fifth of the total figure. In all fairness I must add that no small proportion of the exiles were allowed to return home and resume their jobs after the Purge had ended. On the other hand, some competent observers place the killed as high as thirty or forty thousand, and the exiled at a million. One thing is certain, that from 60 to 70 per cent of the leaders in every field of Soviet activity and endeavor were "purged," and of these at least one-third, and perhaps one-half, were shot. To give exact figures as later published:

> Of the Council of Commissars numbering 21 at the end of 1936, there now remain 5;

one died, Orjonikidze, and the rest were shot or disappeared.

Besides the 8 Generals executed in June, 1937, there were their judges numbering 7, with Ulrich, the eighth, as chairman. Of them, Ulrich and Budenny are the only survivors, although here too, one, Gorbachef, Commander of the Cossacks, died in his bed.

In the Central Committee of the Communist Party which is theoretically the highest unit organism of the U.S.S.R., there were 71 members elected at the beginning of 1934; 21 remained active, 3 died naturally, one, Kirof, was assassinated, 5 quietly disappeared, 31 were arrested, one, Gamarnik, committed suicide, and 9 were shot.

In the city of Kiev between August, 1937, and June, 1938, more than half the members and candidates of the local Communist Party were expelled from said Party on one charge or another.

The Party as a whole had 2,000,000 members and 1,200,000 candidates in 1933, a total of 3,200,000 men and women. In December, 1937, there were less than 1,500,000 members

and candidates together. In January, 1937, Stalin referred to "our 2,000,000 army" of Party members and candidates, but in the spring of 1938, after half a million new members and candidates had been admitted, *Pravda* stated that there were no more than 2,000,000 members and candidates.

By the middle of 1938, matters had reached a perfectly infernal state of misery and chaos. It was like the old Russian fairy-tale called "Why the Sea is Salt." There was a magic mill, and when a button was pressed this mill would grind out salt (highly prized in rural Russia), as much of it as was needed. Someone stole the mill from its owner, and pressed the button wrong, so that it ground out salt all right, but wouldn't stop and couldn't be stopped, and went on grinding salt until there were mountains of salt all over the landscape. There was only one thing to do, and they did it. They took the mill and sailed it out into the middle of the ocean, and there they dropped it overboard, and . . . that's why the Sea is Salt. The Purge was something like that, and the Kremlin found a like remedy.

The astonishing thing is that the Kremlin seems to have been so slow to realize what was happening. That's one of the dangers of dictatorship, the "ivory tower" in which a dictator lives, surrounded by yes-men who fear to carry ill-tidings. It shows too how great and widespread was the terror, that even the mechanism of the Party, which is arranged to pass orders and information up and down with the greatest possible speed and facility, should have been as it were frozen and ceased to function. In the summer of 1938, however, Kaganovich made a trip to the Urals, to Sverdlovsk and the other large new industrial centers in the neighborhood. He was a member of the Politburo and Commissar of Heavy Industry, and like most of his colleagues made two or three such trips of personal inspection every year. He found a most terrible mess.

The "Ural-Mash," which is the biggest machine plant in the Union, was running far below schedule; everyone was discouraged and worried and frightened; labor discipline had gone to pieces, and as my informant expressed it, "We all were running around like chickens with their heads cut off." Kaganovich was horrified. He rushed back to

Moscow to see Stalin, and found there Voroshilof, then Commissar of War, who had just returned from a similar tour in the Ukraine with exactly the same impression about his Army there. Stalin was taking his usual summer rest near Matsesta in his native Georgia, so Kaganovich and Voroshilof immediately ordered a plane to fly them south without losing a moment.

Stalin already had been talking to Beria, one of the ablest of the younger men—he is still under forty—the devoted admirer of Stalin, about whom he had written a book. Himself a Georgian by birth, Beria had been for five years Party Secretary of the Caucasian Federation, and before that had been head of the Caucasian OGPU under Minjinsky. Beria told Stalin that the Commissariat of Internal Affairs, which is really the same as the OGPU except for a change of label, had gone hog-wild under Yezhof, that no doubt a Purge was needed and traitors must be destroyed, but that this was far too much of a good thing.

"Do you know," said Beria to Stalin, "that there's hardly anyone left of last year's Caucasian governments? I've tried to stop it, but in vain. Yet they can't all be Trotskyites and traitors."

Stalin rubbed his forehead thoughtfully. "Kaganovich says the same thing, and Voroshilof. I've just had a wire from Moscow; they'll be here tomorrow by plane."

The next day they all talked it over. Kaganovich was insistent, and Voroshilof spoke frankly about the Army. He said, "The foundations of discipline and comradeship are crumbling. No one dares to trust his fellow, either superior or subordinate. I hear it's the same in the Navy. Both forces are demoralized."

Stalin let them speak, as his fashion is, and sought other information, which more than confirmed what they said. Then he made up his mind and decided: "When I go back to Moscow you shall accompany me, Beria, and take charge of the NKVD. Perhaps at first as Vice-Commissar, because I have no reason to doubt Yezhof's honesty. He is also Commissar of Water Transport; we can let him take charge of that, and later you will become full Commissar."

That seems to have been what happened, because, early in August, Beria's appointment as Vice-Commissar of the NKVD was announced without any reference to Yezhof. The first thing he did,

some ten days later, was to shoot five of Yezhof's NKVD officials for killing, ill-treating and unjustly expelling from the Party more than half of the governmental and economic leaders of the Moldavian Republic, in the southwestern Ukraine bordering Bessarabia. A few sharp-eyed foreign observers caught the meaning of this gesture, but they did not yet realize that it betokened the end of the Purge and the beginning of the "Purge of the Purgers" which later cost Yezhof his life—or so it is generally believed, although there has been no formal statement to that effect. On December 8, Beria was appointed Chief Commissar of the NKVD in Yezhof's place, but the latter remained Commissar of Water Transport and was photographed with Stalin and other leaders on the platform of Lenin's mausoleum at some function early in January.

The very same week, a play was produced in Moscow which convinced the most skeptical foreigner that the Purge was really ended. It was called *Pavel Grekof,* the name of its hero, a Communist engineer expelled from the Party who came within an inch of being arrested, and all his friends deserted him and even his wife was

hesitant, until at last he managed to prove that he had been slandered.

This play was the joint work of a group of young Communists from Siberia, and the first theatre director to whom they showed it in Moscow leapt from his chair in horror, screaming: "What! Do you want to destroy me? If I accepted a play like this, we'd all be shot the morning after the first rehearsal." Other managers struck the same note, until one, at the Theatre of the Revolution, more courageous or far-sighted, said: "This is strong meat indeed, but let me show it to a friend of mine who is very close to the Kremlin. Perhaps . . ." He'd guessed right, and produced the play. The most interesting thing was the behavior of the public, which cheered to the echo lines that six months before would have sent the cheerers to Kamchatka to cut wood for the rest of their lives. The show was a raging success, and the house was sold out two months in advance.

Quick and fast came other signs that the Purge was really ended. Under Beria's direction the NKVD and the Party Control Commission departments at once set to work revising all cases of expulsion. In a trice the papers were full of the

"almost incredible" stories I referred to earlier about tried and trusted Communists being expelled and ill-treated for the most fanciful or sadistic reasons. Figures published about the revision in the provinces of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Stalingrad, and I think Yaroslav, showed that between 50 and 60 per cent of the expulsions had been made without due or proper cause. The victims were promptly reinstated and, if exiled, brought back to their homes and former positions. For the rest of the country no such figures were made known, but one presumes that they would correspond. Was not this a terrific indictment of Yezhof and his methods? But who could bring back the dead?

That the nation's reaction to the Purge had been one of horror and anguish was clear from its joy and relief when the shadow at last was lifted. It was like the break-up of an ice dam on a frozen river. People walked with their heads in the air, and talked and smiled, talked actually to foreigners, instead of looking askance. Then the exiles began to return, and some of them came to see me, men who'd been my friends in the past, even one whom I'd mourned as dead.

His tale was the book of Job, unmerited, heavy suffering, then a turn which set everything right. He'd been head of a department in a Moscow metal works, was arrested suddenly one night, and soon found himself willy-nilly in a Siberian lumber camp, where I gather he was "not amused." Six months later there came a call for volunteers to work in a new armament factory near by. My friend got employment there, and rapid advancement, because he was really competent. After a few weeks he was put in charge of a shop, and a little later was told that he had been pardoned and would henceforth receive full wages. More time passed, and he became director of a section which was bigger than the whole plant where he'd worked in Moscow. Meanwhile, though he did not know it, his case was being revised, and one day he received the news that he had been reinstated in the Party and was free to return to Moscow and resume his position there.

At this point I am bound to confess that I am baffled by Russians, although I know them well. True, my friend was only a young man, say thirty-three at the most, but even so . . . I suppose, however, that Job must have talked like this one, after his

trouble was past, and again he'd become a patriarch, with wives and children and servants and cattle as before. "I don't want it!" my Russian cried gaily. "I wouldn't have that old job on a plate! The East is the place for a man. Why, I tell you, in five more years that new town of ours will have two hundred thousand inhabitants. What's more, by the end of this summer my new apartment will be built"—he'd been living, it seems, in a dugout—"and there's an extra bedroom so you can come and stay with me, and meet my new wife. Of course the other divorced me, and I hear that she's remarried. That's why I came to Moscow, to get my share of the furniture. I'd like you to meet my new wife. She's the daughter of one of my colleagues. In fact," he lowered his voice confidentially, "she's much prettier and younger than my other wife, and a better cook."

He spoke so cheerfully that I could not resist a question. "Tell me, what do you think of the Purge?"

He looked startled for a moment, then said firmly: "When you were a kid did you ever have one of those kaleidoscope toys, where you looked down a metal tube and saw a pattern of colored

glass, like the windows in a church? Then you turned the other end of the tube and the pattern fell to pieces, all diving and chasing each other, like painted stars, until you stopped turning, and there was another pattern, quite different from the first one but made of the same old pieces. Our Russia is like that."

"Not quite the same old pieces," I remarked, "because a lot of them got smashed."

That didn't faze him at all. "I know," he said, "that's a pity, but I tell you, this is Russia; and for every man that is killed or scared or exiled there are ten more ready to come and shoulder his job and its risks. Suppose the Purge did hit as high as a million people. I think it's much less than that, and many are coming back, and after all, few were shot. But if it had been ten million, then what? Russia can stand it. Russia can stand anything, and the Purge is worth what it cost, because it gave us unity, and got rid of traitors, and the filth of Opposition.

"I know you Americans have it otherwise and the same is true of England—His Majesty's Opposition, they call it—and Republicans can get up in the Senate and call the President names. But that

won't do in Russia, dammit man; don't you know that we're just emerging from feudalism, from the England of the Tudors? We've jumped to the twenty-first century, and of course it isn't easy, and of course the Purge set us back, and of course it went too far; but I tell you it had to be done.

"Why, even the Trials were right, whatever you foreigners may say. I read quite a lot of the stuff that was written in foreign papers about the 'mystery' of the Trials, and why the culprits confessed, yards of nonsense written by foreigners who'd never heard that in the days of Ivan the Terrible some nobleman offended Ivan and was seated on a pointed stick. Impalement, they call it, and it's more Oriental than Russian, Chinese torture stuff, and by all accounts extremely unpleasant and painful. It took this citizen thirty-six hours to die and he spent the whole time singing 'God Save the Tsar.' That's Russian for you. Do you think we care if ten million people were liquidated, provided Stalin stands and the Kremlin and the Party and our own Soviet Union? Do you think we care? We're Russians."

No matter what my friend declared, and however resilient Russians may be, I still maintain

that the Purge did incalculable harm and set back the country's progress a full five years. Nevertheless, I cannot forget what a high-placed and saddened Frenchman told me recently in Washington when we were discussing the Purge. "Yes," he said, "it must have been awful, like a madness, as you call it. But don't forget, *mon ami,* that in Russia they shot the Fifth Columnists, and in France we made them Cabinet Ministers. You see both results today . . . at Vichy, and on the Red war-front."

VII. THE U.S.S.R. AND MUNICH

In March, 1939, the Kremlin called a full Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow, the first to be held in five years, although Party statutes theoretically required a meeting every two years. The Congress marked historically and definitely the end of the Purge. It adopted a program, prepared by Zdanof, of reforms in the Party structure. Henceforth everyone, intellectuals, soldiers, workers, and peasants, could enter the Party on the same basis, whereas before strictly proletarian candidates had much easier conditions in regard to sponsors and length of probation period. The Congress also dismissed and approved the new Labor

Law which had been passed a few weeks before, inflicting severe penalties on all employees coming late to their jobs or being absent without good reason. It was essential to restore and tighten labor discipline after the Purge let-down, and the result was soon apparent in a sharp improvement—35 per cent or more—in the index of industrial production, freight-car loadings, mining, and so forth.

The atmosphere of the Congress was charged with confidence and hope, as far as the internal affairs of the U.S.S.R. were concerned. The country had emerged from a nightmare and was moving forward united to a better and happier future. From an external viewpoint, however, the prospect was less rosy, and the key speech of the Congress, delivered by Stalin, gave full warning of danger ahead. More perhaps than any European statesman, Stalin makes what are known as "program" speeches, that is to say that his rare public utterances embody not only the Kremlin's views but the policies it intends to follow.

On this occasion Stalin made one statement whose importance was tremendous, although none of us appreciated it at the time. He said that the U.S.S.R. would hold rigidly to the maintenance of

peace and opposition to "war-incendiaries," but added that the U.S.S.R. would not let itself *be made a cat's-paw* by anyone. Stalin laid down three cardinal principles of Soviet relations with other countries:

1. Unflinching resistance to any aggression against the U.S.S.R.
2. Sympathy for victims of aggression everywhere, and such assistance as might be feasible.
3. Preservation of peace and friendship wherever possible.

Had the world but known it, this speech was the expression of the Kremlin's dissatisfaction with the Munich Agreement, of its doubts as to the intentions of the French and British governments, and of its conviction that the policy of collective security, to which the U.S.S.R. had adhered, was doomed, like its offspring, the policy of appeasement, to speedy and terrible disaster.

The Munich Agreement seemed to mark the greatest humiliation which the Soviet Union had suffered since the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. It was

so regarded by the Russians, who were not even consulted in the negotiations which led up to it. Their suggestions were ignored. They were treated not as poor relations, nor even as enemies, but more insultingly they were simply left out of the picture as unworthy of notice or interest. True, in one moment of extremity when the British fleet was mobilized and it seemed that war was inevitable, Mr. Chamberlain brought himself to say that Britain, France, and *Russia* would fight to save the Czechs. And flew to Germany the next day, to throw the Czechs to the wolves.

I shall not readily forget the face of a friend in the Soviet Embassy in London, on the day of Mr. Chamberlain's "triumphant" return, with heart full of hope, pockets full of promises, and the words, "I bring peace in our time," flowing unctuously from his mouth. The Russian diplomat's eyes were dark with passion and his lips were bitter with scorn. "The most needless surrender in history. Did they plan it from the first? Again and again we assured them, both the British and the French, that the U.S.S.R. would fulfill its obligations and help Czechoslovakia by force of arms. Litvinof said so at Geneva, yet in the face of our

positive statements, M. Bonnet shrugged his shoulders and hinted to all and sundry that the French, who as Russia's ally were in a position to know, had grave misgivings about Soviet participation should the crisis end in war. We made repeated proposals for military consultation to co-ordinate strategic plans in case of hostilities. They did not deign to answer. And now they talk of peace, and call it peace with honor, and put trust in Hitler's word. I tell you time will show them, and a very short time too."

"There is one thing you forget," I replied slowly. "It is hard for any Russian, even you who live in London, to realize the effects abroad of your Purge. I don't mean only what might be called the moral effects, the horror and bewilderment the Purge has caused in the very circles of foreign opinion that were most sympathetic to Russia, although that is bad enough. What I speak of is the widespread, almost universal, conviction that the U.S.S.R. has been hamstrung by the Purge, if it is not actually falling to pieces, and that even supposing its willingness to fight is genuine, they do not believe it *can* fight. Wait a minute,"—he tried to protest—"I'm not saying that

they are right, I'm telling you what they believe; or how else do you think Lindbergh could have been believed when he said your air fleet was worthless? I know there are other reasons, but that at least was a big one."

Events—and Hitler—were swift to justify Stalin's foresight. Ere the echo of his words had died, Hitler struck afresh at Czechoslovakia, and at Memel, and delivered what was virtually an economic ultimatum to Rumania. In alarm the French and British governments appealed to the U.S.S.R. to take joint action on behalf of Rumania's independence. The Kremlin countered with a proposal to hold an immediate conference of the most interested powers, France, Britain, the U.S.S.R., Poland, Rumania, and perhaps Turkey. The reason for this proposal was something that was a vital factor in the relations of the U.S.S.R. with Britain and France, and therefore of paramount importance to Europe. It was simply that the U.S.S.R. did not trust France and Britain, or rather their governments, and more particularly their leaders, Messrs. Bonnet and Chamberlain. The U.S.S.R. had not forgotten Munich.

The purpose then of the conference proposal was to force France and Britain out into the open and to forestall the maneuver which the Russians suspected they were attempting, namely, the use by them of the U.S.S.R. as a bogey to frighten Germany, without committing them to any definite action. The Russians wanted international co-operation against aggressors and a return to a policy of collective security, but they made it clear that such co-operation must be genuine and that they had no intention of being a cat's-paw for Britain or France.

Perhaps not wholly by accident, although his visit had been planned some weeks before, the British Minister of Overseas Trade, Mr. H. F. Hudson, reached Moscow two days after the Franco-British appeal on behalf of Rumania. It was the first visit of a British Minister since Anthony Eden came to Moscow in the autumn of 1934, and although Mr. Hudson's main purpose was to persuade the Russians to agree to negotiate a new trade agreement—I am quoting his own words—he did not deny that recent events had given some political significance to his presence in the Soviet capital.

Hudson got what he came for. I was present at a rather interesting little scene in the British Embassy on the night of Monday, March 27. It was 11:45 P.M., and the Hudson party was scheduled to catch the 12:30 train for Leningrad. In the courtyard of the Embassy, which overlooks the river facing the Kremlin, stood big black limousines with the British flag on their bonnets. The main entrance hall was full of baggage and agitated servants looking at their watches.

We waited in a long high room profusely decorated with carved oak which had once been the library of Haritonenko, Tsarist Russia's greatest sugar king, the former owner of the mansion. At 11:47 Hudson bustled in, a tall, thickset ruddy man with strong features, and at once began to read a statement which announced the success of his mission but diverged somewhat curiously, as we discovered later, from an announcement the same evening issued by the Soviet Foreign Office. The latter stressed, which Hudson did not mention, that he had been received by Premier Molotof, and laid further emphasis upon the work that had been done in discussing international problems as well as purely economic questions. The conclusion

was obvious enough, that the British for their own good reasons were not overanxious to display the fact they were engaged in discussing such problems with the U.S.S.R., but that this *had* been part of Hudson's mission. The Russians on the other hand were glad to have it known, and above all knew it themselves. They must have felt sardonically the change that had come since Munich, and that the "pay-off" from Munich already was beginning.

As the Kremlin estimated Munich, an underlying purpose then entertained by Mr. Chamberlain was to leave Hitler a more or less free hand for expansion eastward. In short, to let him follow the line laid down in *Mein Kampf,* and repeated in his Nuremburg speech in September, 1936, of attacking the Ukraine with its rich grain-fields and the coal and iron resources of the Donetz Basin. Nothing could have been more welcome to British and French statesmen than to see German Nazism in a death grapple with Russian Bolshevism, and if the Japanese would only join in and all three of them fight each other to a standstill, no tears would be shed in either London or Paris.

The Kremlin was aware of this naïve hope, which

did not enhance its love for Chamberlain. Unfortunately for the latter, Herr Hitler failed to bite, or rather, preferred to follow his favorite policy of progress step by step, first to seize Memel and swallow what was left of Czechoslovakia, then to consolidate his economic hold upon Rumania and the Danube, in order subsequently to challenge Poland for the possession of Danzig and the Corridor. The Kremlin was far more alive than Chamberlain or Bonnet to Hitler's real aims, and to the worthlessness of the promises which he had made at Munich. It had learned from the Treason Trials that Nazi Germany was its destined and ultimate foe, and it was therefore willing to make a last effort to co-operate with France and Britain, in the hope of reviving the moribund collective security. It was on this account that the U.S.S.R. was the first to issue a vigorous protest against Hitler's final rape of Czechoslovakia.

The circumstances in which this protest was made, or rather received, were colorful. It was the night of March 18, when Madame Rosso, the American-born wife of the Italian Ambassador, gave a costume ball to the whole Diplomatic Corps, which was easily the peak of the Moscow

social season. The Italians had the finest Embassy in Moscow, a huge mansion where in August, 1918, the German Ambassador Count von Mirbach was first bombed and then shot dead by two Social-Revolutionary assassins who plotted to break the peace signed at Brest-Litovsk between Germany and the Bolsheviks.

The great halls were crowded with a mass of brilliant costumes, and in one of the lower rooms I noted, because I knew where to look for it, a small patch high up in the gilded cornice where a fragment of the Social-Revolutionary bomb once tore away part of the ceiling. Suddenly one of the German attachés, resplendent in the uniform of the Teutonic Knights of the Sword, came hurrying to his Ambassador, Count von Shulenberg, who wore conventional evening dress. Other German diplomats appeared as if by magic, sought their hostess hurriedly and left the house in a body. The incident passed unnoticed, but what had happened was that the Russian note of protest had been delivered at the German Embassy, and then, as no one was there, brought on to the Italian party, where Count von Shulenberg re-

ceived it and felt that it must be answered without delay.

The tide of world affairs was now rising to the "high" which culminated in the second World War. Germany's reply to the Soviet protest was mild and noncommittal, and there were persistent rumors in Moscow that Germany proposed to send an important economic representative for the purpose of widening the basis of Soviet-German trade. It is worth mentioning here that despite Hitler's frequent diatribes against "Judaeo-Bolshevism," none of the political, economic, and financial agreements between Germany and the U.S.S.R., which had been made by the two countries in the decade of their close co-operation and friendship from 1922 (the Rapallo Pact) to 1932, had ever been canceled or abrogated. Hudson's arrival in Moscow seems to have forestalled the German plan, and it leaked out from the German Embassy that "important negotiations for a new and more comprehensive Trade Agreement with the U.S.S.R. would shortly be opened in Berlin." The information proved correct, and it was from these negotiations that later came the Russo-Ger-

man Pact of August, 1939, which may be said to have raised the curtain for the war.

In a speech on April 3, Mr. Chamberlain admitted the gravity of the Germano-Polish crisis, and the virtual failure of his appeasement policy. He announced the British guarantee of Poland's territorial integrity—a hasty and fruitless measure which rendered no service to Poland—and indicated that Britain and France might revert to the policy of collective security on lines desired by the Kremlin. Put briefly, the Kremlin wanted a hard and fast agreement of Great Britain, France, and the U.S.S.R., with such other smaller countries as cared to join it, to oppose aggression anywhere, by force of arms if need be.

As Mr. Chamberlain said, such an agreement would not apply to "frontier incidents or similar minor squabbles," but would nevertheless be a concrete barrier to fresh aggressive action. The Kremlin, as I have said, was none too sanguine about either the sincerity or backbone of the French and British governments, but it felt that if they did at last intend to put teeth into collective security, Hitler might shrink at the eleventh hour from challenging the combined forces of the

three Powers, doubtless backed by the smaller nations of Europe and the moral support and sympathy of the United States.

From the outset the "conversations" or negotiations between the U.S.S.R. and the Franco-British were cursed by an evil star. To begin with, the Kremlin was annoyed that no heed had been taken of its earlier proposal to include Poland, Rumania, and perhaps Turkey in the talks at Moscow, and its irritation was greatly increased by the British choice of a comparatively unknown Foreign Office official, Mr. William Strang, to act as their spokesman there. Mr. Strang had formerly been Counselor of Embassy in Moscow, and during his service had fallen foul of the Soviet Foreign Office through his spirited, but perfectly correct, defense of the interests of his fellow-countrymen accused of sabotage in the Metro-Vickers Trial.

Mr. Strang spoke Russian fluently and had for some time been in charge of the Russian division of the British Foreign Office, but the Kremlin thought that if the British really meant business they would have sent a more eminent man. Nevertheless, there was a moment in the early summer

when it seemed that an accord was almost reached. At that time the Russians wanted no more than a blanket agreement on the lines I have mentioned earlier, which they hoped would serve as a red light to Hitler. It is my own belief, which is shared by the then French Chargé d'Affaires, who took part in the discussions, that such an agreement was possible, but I am unable to say whether the Russians are right in asserting that the British government somehow balked at the last minute.

At any rate the talks proved abortive, and Mr. Strang returned to London. There were, however, people in England bolder and more clairvoyant than Mr. Chamberlain and his friends, and thanks to their insistence a second British mission was sent to Moscow. By this time the writing on the wall was clear for all who had eyes to see, and the mission was military in character, to prepare and co-ordinate with the U.S.S.R. resistance to aggression; but again its personnel was not such as to command the Kremlin's respect or overcome its doubts.

On this occasion there was a new and harder tone in the Soviet proposals. The Russians demanded "territorial guarantees" in the Baltic

States and Finland, by which they doubtless meant the right to install their own forces at key points. They further asked that Poland should agree to the passage into Polish territory of two Soviet armies, in the North and South, immediately after the beginning of hostilities, or earlier should the Kremlin judge it necessary. These armies, it was stated, would be independent of the Polish High Command, but would of course co-operate with it. Obviously there was little chance of these proposals being accepted, and it is probable that the Russians had already given the Franco-British up as a bad job and decided that unless they were clever and nimble they would be left, so to speak, with the Polish baby on their doorstep.

The Kremlin, remember, was suspicious of France and Britain. It saw that should war break out, the two Western Powers could do little in aid of Poland. It knew, moreover, the weakness of Poland and the strength of the German blitzkrieg, which its soldiers had seen being perfected in Spain. Alignment with France and Britain meant at best, the Kremlin thought, that the U.S.S.R. must singly defend a shattered Poland against Germany, with no immediate prospect of Franco-

British help. At worst, Bonnet and Chamberlain would succeed in their design of embroiling Nazism and Bolshevism in mortal strife, and were ready to sacrifice Poland in order to reach that result.

Faced by these alternatives, the Kremlin, it claimed, had no choice save to accept the pact which the Germans were now willing to offer. It could have had little doubt as to Hitler's ultimate intentions towards the U.S.S.R., but it may well have expected that without the support of the U.S.S.R., Poland and the Franco-British would give way to Hitler's demands, and that whether they did or not, whether peace or war ensued, the U.S.S.R. would anyway have gained further time for its defense program. I think that the Kremlin underestimated the martial temper of the Poles, as later it did that of the Finns, but the curious hesitations which preceded the declaration of war by the Chamberlain and Daladier-Bonnet governments would indicate that they at least were contemplating yet another "appeasement," and only decided to fight under public pressure. Be that as it may, on August 23 the U.S.S.R. startled the world by signing a pact with the Nazis.

France and Britain at once declared that this was a great betrayal, and in America it was said, more vividly, that Russia thus "gave the green light to Hitler." It was argued that the Bolsheviks had craftily played both ends against the middle in order to plunge Europe into the war which their Marxist dogma proclaimed would be the prelude to revolution. Another theory was that the Red and Brown "totalitarian despotisms" had concluded an unholy alliance to enslave the rest of humanity, or anyway Europe and Asia. Some color was lent to this view by the speedy announcement of the Russo-German program for Poland's partition, and by the Soviet acquisition, with Germany's aid and blessing, of the coveted "territorial guarantees" in the Baltic States.

An additional proof that the U.S.S.R. had been "stringing" the Franco-British all summer was seen in the replacement on May 4 of the Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinof, a notable champion of collective security and the League of Nations, by the Soviet Premier Molotof, who was stated to be pro-German. All in all, a convincing case was made, and most of the world believed it; but in light of subsequent events, fu-

ture historians may judge that the Kremlin played a most difficult game with no little dexterity, because it had clearer and more penetrating eyes than its contemporaries, and took what measures it could to avert or postpone the dangers it discerned far ahead.

VIII. THE HEARTS OF THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

THE RUSSIANS ARE stout of heart and stubborn in defense, as the British once learned to their cost in the Crimean War eighty-five years ago. The siege of Sebastopol, which the Russians call "Sevastowpol," with accent on the "tow," caused the British Army plenty of blood and sweat, and at that the French, not the British, took Redan, the key to the fortress. Yes, indeed, the Russians are stubborn and good at defense.

Life is not easy in Russia; you must learn to defend, or die. Survival of the fittest, Darwin called it, and it is indeed true about Russia, where there have been many occasions like today when only the strong could survive.

But the Russians are always Russians, and that means kittle-kattle, if you know what *that* means. It's Scotch, and the Scotch are canny. The late King Alfonso of Spain once said to Colonel de Vigne, then Military Attaché of the French Republic in Spain, a wise word about the Russians. It was in the winter of 1916-17, in the midst of the last World War, when there was peace talk bruited around, and it seems the King of Spain was mixed up in it, and the French Military Attaché was trying to sell him a bill of goods about some great Russian offensive that would make the Germans stagger. The King said: "My honored Mother, Her Majesty Queen Isabella, a most intelligent woman, once told me, 'You never know about Russians, the Russian is like a cat, you never know where he will jump.' "

Those were indeed words of wisdom, because in the following year the Russians threw out their "Little Father," the Tsar, whom later they shot dead with all his family, and made a Red revolution and stepped themselves out of the war which nearly ruined the Allies, so it seems that Alfonso guessed right.

On the other hand, Soviet Russians say all that

is ancient history, that they are different Russians, and can fight to the death and will. But a cat is always a cat, although I do like the Russians . . . and also like cats.

The new (Soviet) Russians declare that the Kremlin has won the full respect and devotion of the people. This was denied by many foreign observers in Moscow, including some of the diplomats. Almost everywhere in the world there is a tendency for the Diplomatic Corps to form a sort of close corporation of its own, or "live in an ivory tower," Olympian and aloof. This is especially true in countries like the U.S.S.R., Turkey, Japan, Iran, China, and India, where racial, linguistic, or social considerations emphasize the difference between *all* foreigners and the people of the country. If a State, then, really wished to find out about other States, I think its best plan would be to seek that information not from diplomats who are remote and preoccupied, nor from reporters, too busy chasing the trees of news to be able to see the wood, but from a dozen, score, or hundred—according to the size of the country—social workers of both sexes, scattered at various

points. Teachers, doctors, nurses, and the like, youngish, to avoid prejudice, keen on their work and speaking the language fluently. Every three months each one should make a report on conditions, trends, and the other factors which form public opinion. They would thus give a real cross-section, and their home government would avoid such examples of ignorance as occurred about France in 1939-40, and for that matter Germany, in the years when the Nazis were stealthily preparing their war machine. Such a system would have been invaluable in the U.S.S.R., where the gulf between foreigners and the Russian masses was both wide and deep.

The fact is that some 90 and more per cent of the Russian nation had little fun in the old days and were little better than slaves. It was fun, I admit, for the nobles and the generals and the rich and cultured people. But not much fun for the masses who lived like pigs in the dirt and not like pigs in clover. I'll never forget one day—this gives you the truth about Soviet Russia and why the boys are fighting—when I went to the Moscow University to talk to a youngster I knew, and found him sharing a room about ten feet by ten with

three other boys. There were only two beds among them, but there was a telephone, and steam heat. No sheets, of course, but blankets; and books piled up everywhere and only one table for all four of them to work on; and "modern plumbing" down the hall, though no bathroom. You did know about the plumbing, in no very pleasant way.

So I said to this young man, "It must be hard for you to work in such conditions."

He gave me an odd look and said slowly, "Do you know my earliest memory, the first page in my brain's book of life? It was sucking the teats of a sow in the place where I was born, which was a wooden lean-to against the hut of a Kulak peasant who employed my father. The lean-to was built as near as possible to the stove of the Kulak peasant, because *we* had no stove. Nor anything save our pig, this big fat sow and her piglings. There were seven of us children, nearly naked and always hungry, and I was the fifth. My mother dragged me away from the pig—the first thing I remember in my life—and said, 'Little pigs are worth money, but babies are a nuisance,' and threw me into the corner. You say *these* are hard

conditions? . . . Perhaps they are hard for you, but to me they are heaven and splendor, they give me a chance to learn, they teach me engineering, and let me live rent free; they give me food and clothing, and thirty rubles a month"—(about one American dollar at that time)—"for cigarettes and amusements. They give me a chance in life, to become a man, not a pig. That's what Lenin and Stalin have done for me and millions of others. You foreigners can't understand, but we know and we understand. I tell you, if ever the test comes, if ever they strike at our Russia, we shall fight for it, down to the depths and up to the topmost heights. The Bolshevik Revolution! It gave us a chance in life."

That, I thought, was impressive; at least it impressed me. And true, I knew it was true. I *can* know truth when I hear it.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, has said his say about freedoms. He also talked about freedom of religion in Russia, which was not the best of his talks. As I have said somewhere else in this book, the Russian's idea of freedom is not the idea we have. They are only groping for freedom, although in some ways, which

perhaps are the ways of life, the basic ways of life, Russians are not less free than we are. It is one of the strangest things, that the average Soviet Russian honestly believes that the system under which he lives, which we consider a tyranny, or dictatorship, or totalitarian regime, or anything save freedom—the average Russian thinks that his regime is freer than the "plutocratic oligarchy" (as he terms it) under which, he says, Americans live, move, and have their being. That's what the Russian says, and that's what the Russian thinks, and he doesn't believe in our freedoms, but he does believe in his own. It's amazing, but that's how it is.

You cannot understand Russia unless you talk to the people, to the little ones, the men who never got "purged" because they were unimportant, the little small man in the street—the street or the ragged village—the little small humble man who does not ask for much: first, bread to put in his mouth, not bread-and-butter but bread, with perhaps a piece of meat. And a wife whom he loves and to love him, and children because they come. And warmth against the winter, because the winter is cold. And clothing—oh yes, he needs

that—and of course he wants other things too. He wants education, first of all, because he's Russian, the most avid-for-education race of any on this earth. He wants travel, because his ancestors were nomads. He *may* want—I am not sure—the right to vote by ballot, the right to worship or not, the right to talk as he pleases. Of those things I am not sure, but I *know* of another right which every Russian has. The right to fight and die for his own country, which all Russians love.

The Russians are not like us; I mean they do not care about "rugged individualism." The mass of the Russian people want things which Americans want, and many Americans have, but they do not like Tsars or landlords or bankers or Kulaks or traitors. If you wish to know the truth, the Russian masses applauded when such folk were shot. That's dreadful but it's true. Having had to "pig it" together because they were treated like pigs, they are not aloof from co-operative action. The bosses had individualism, and the landlords and the nobles, but the masses did not have a chance of individualism. Until now.

Until now, when a kid from a village gets out and flies over the Pole, or does something to earn

him glory, a simple kid from a village. Then they give him the Order of Lenin and invite him to the Kremlin. You don't know what it means to Russians, to be invited to the Kremlin and meet Stalin and the others. That is one smart trick they have done, that anyone who stands out or invents something or does something new for Russia, they ask to the Kremlin, and put his name in the papers, and give him the time of his life. Like Sergeant York.

You can call it political slickness, but really it's more than that; it's trying to lift your people, to help them upward and on. And make them proud of themselves, and give them a reason to live. Not easy, you know, with slave races. Oh dear, no, it wasn't easy. Moses faced the same problem with his Jews who were slaves in Egypt, and solved it by telling the Jews that Jehovah, the Only God, was personally interested in how every Jew took his breakfast and lunch and dinner, and how he shaved his beard, and how he washed his body. Moses put manhood into his Jews by ritual, by the thought that Jehovah was watching the way they ate and washed, and was interested in them. That made them feel pretty good, and say what

you like of the Jews, I say they still are good, and have been good for many years and will go on being good, and neither Hitler nor Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain will stop them. The Lord said, "My chosen people," and if you believe the Bible . . .

The Bolshevik Revolution was made, if you like, by Lenin. But you can't "make" a revolution, you must have certain conditions. The first and cardinal one is that the majority of your population does not like the way they live. That was true in the Russian Empire, and that was why Lenin won. I do not pretend to say that every living Russian adores the Kremlin today and thinks Stalin is God Almighty and Russia heaven on earth. Of course that is utter nonsense, but I would say that most of the people, especially the young ones, feel that the Soviet regime is good enough for them and worth their blood to defend. I could even give you statistics, about hygiene and health, and education and sports, and music and radio, and all sorts of things brought to a nation which never had any fun. The 5 per cent had fun, the 5 per cent at the top; oh yes, they

had marvelous fun. But the others lived mostly like beasts and weren't even fed enough.

If I were asked to tell you in one sentence what the Bolshevik Revolution has done to the Russian people, I should say it has given them Hope, the one thing left, you remember, in the box which Pandora opened.

IX. THE PERIOD OF "NEUTRALITY"

IF THE WESTERN world was outraged by the vagaries of the Kremlin's foreign policy in the summer of 1939, the Soviet masses were frankly bewildered. It is true that they had a congenital dislike for the English and little regard for the French, whereas the Germans had always enjoyed a certain prestige in Russia as industrious, competent folk; and there was, too, the memory of ten years' recent friendship with Germany from Rapallo to the advent of Hitler.

On the other hand, there was hardly a man, woman or child in the U.S.S.R. who did not know that Hitler and his Nazis were their country's

deadliest enemy. Like its rulers, the Soviet nation had learned that lesson from the Trials, and since the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the League of Nations in 1934, it had been taught to regard France and Britain as potential allies, however lukewarm, in the struggle with Nazi-Fascism. To find suddenly that the "Line" and the slogans were changed, that their country was now ranged beside Germany in the conflict with "Western plutocratic pseudo-democracies" (as *Pravda* called them), was startling to say the least. Let the Kremlin's pipers play never so sweetly, there was many a Soviet citizen, inside the Party and outside it, who hated to dance with Germany.

A far more vivid picture of the public state of mind than any I can give, as suggested before, is painted by Tolstoy in his masterpiece, *War and Peace,* where he describes the effects of similar changes of policy in the days of Alexander I and Napoleon. The parallel is amazingly exact. First, the Russians fought Napoleon as allies of Austria and Prussia. At the great battle of Austerlitz, more Russian troops than Austrians were engaged; and again at Friedland, when Napoleon completed his conquest of Prussia, there were more Russians

than Prussians to fight and die in that stubborn and bloody fray.

Suddenly, almost overnight, the two Emperors were friends and brothers. Meeting in amity and pomp on an island in the River Niemen, the "Corsican upstart, Bonaparte," became "His Imperial Majesty Napoleon I," and the Russian Army, from field-marshal to raw recruit, felt as if it was standing on its head.

Tolstoy writes a priceless account of a scene at an Army Staff dinner, when the officers debated how they should treat the French. A rotund general declared he would greet French officers, if forced to meet them, with dignified reserve. "When they salute me, I shall incline my head without speaking." A colonel said he would turn his back on any Frenchman. A major then vowed that he would challenge every Frenchman to a duel. Talk waxed hot and furious, until one of the senior officers said quietly, "Gentlemen, you must and will behave with perfect courtesy towards our recent enemies. Our Emperor has chosen, for reasons good to His Illustrious and Imperial Majesty, that our country and France shall be friends. You have all sworn oaths of allegiance,

there can therefore be no question about your conduct." Alexander I was popular and beloved, and with a few trifling exceptions his Army and people stifled their inner doubts and followed the path he had drawn.

So, in 1939, the Soviet nation took a big gulp and swallowed the pact with Germany. Without much liking it either, but the will of the Kremlin was law. Yet they knew that the respite was only temporary, as Alexander's officers knew that sooner or later Napoleon's greed for dominion over Europe—if not, like Hitler's, for world domination—would bring him into conflict with their country. Historical parallels are proverbially fallacious, but this one holds good right through. Napoleon did attack Russia one day, as Hitler turned and attacked it, with the same purpose and in the same week of the year. Both usurpers saw the same thing, that without the defeat of Russia their empires were founded on sand. Both dreamed of a swift campaign and peace on their own terms. The world knows Napoleon's fate.

Alexander's deal with Napoleon was essentially political in purpose, but the Soviet-Nazi pact had also a strong economic aspect. By this and later

agreements, the U.S.S.R. agreed to deliver great quantities of oil, grain, cotton, manganese, and other raw materials; but this was no mere tribute or sacrifice imposed by force. The Soviet received in exchange, through a clearing system, German machines and spare parts, machine tools, instruments of precision, chemicals and drugs. Soviet industry had run down badly during the Purge, and most of its machines and tools needed replacement or repair. It was already beginning to produce such things for itself, but of all machinery imported in the last ten years, more than 60 per cent was of German origin.

It speedily became apparent that British and American factories would be far too busy with their own affairs to spare tools or machines for Russia. This task devolved upon Germany and the countries Germany controlled. Thus Germany received much-needed raw materials, but the U.S.S.R. benefited even more by the exchange, and it is ironical to reflect that the mechanical equipment which met and checked the Germans, and whose rapid development in the twelve months prior to June, 1941, had perhaps been one of the factors in deciding Hitler to attack, had been

largely thus developed and produced by tools and machines from Germany. In this partnership that was also a duel, economic as well as political honors were not all on the Nazi side.

In the year which followed the Soviet-German pact, the Kremlin played its own hand with a disregard for public opinion abroad so complete as to be almost cynical. I suppose that since the days of Attila the Hun, whom a horrified Europe labeled "the Scourge of God," no State has ever roused such hostility and dislike. In the United States especially, people felt that this was the culmination of the barbarity of the Trials and the madness of the Purge. To Americans the partition of Poland was like stabbing in the back a man who is mortally wounded. The savage onslaught upon little Finland was as unprovoked and baseless as it was provoking and base. Finally, the seizures of Bessarabia and the Baltic States in the summer of 1940 were acts of ruthless greed that put even Hitler to shame.

The Kremlin "lay low and said nuffin." Seemingly indifferent to the storm of foreign criticism, it forged grimly ahead along the road it had chosen. Did Hitler require more grain, or oil or

cotton, as he saw that the fall of France left the British undismayed? Well and good, let him have what he asked, provided, always provided, that he gave in exchange the machines for which Russian industry clamored. As for the new territory, the "recuperated areas," as the Soviet Foreign Office termed them, what were they but a skirmish ground, an outer glacis to aid in the defense of the "battle zones in depth" which Soviet military engineers had been preparing for seven long years behind the earlier frontiers of the U.S.S.R.?

The case of Finland was peculiar, because in places its frontier was less than fifty miles from Leningrad, once St. Petersburg, capital of Russia, now second city of the U.S.S.R., with its huge Putiloff armament works, its shipbuilding and other industrial plants. You might say the same of Detroit, that this vital center of American industry lies literally under Canadian guns; but the circumstances are different. Instead of being virtually frontierless and united by ancient friendship like Canada and the United States, Finland and the U.S.S.R. were divided by enmities that dated much further back than the revolutionary struggle of 1918-19, the worst and most bloody of all

civil wars in history, where the White Finns finally triumphed and vied with the Reds' excesses in stamping the Communists out.

Moreover, Finland was a small, weak country incapable of resisting foreign influence, and as the Kremlin knew, its leaders owed no little of their success in the Civil War to the aid of the German General von der Goltz and his divisions. In 1938-39 there had been persistent reports of new German "commercial" air-lines, air-fields, and other "commercial" enterprises and agreements in Finland. The danger was as obvious as if central Long Island, or Burlingame, California, were held by unfriendly little States which might at any moment agree with a great unfriendly Power to unleash its war-dogs upon New York or San Francisco. Here if anywhere, thought the Kremlin, "territorial guarantees" were imperative. Accordingly, in the late autumn of 1939, there began negotiations between the U.S.S.R. and Finland to give the former some practical assurance that a foreign force striking from Finland would not find itself at the start within gun range of Peter's City.

I was not in Moscow or Helsinki at the time,

but my friend Herbert Elliston, of the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, one of the ablest foreign correspondents I know, was in Helsinki throughout the negotiations, and I'd take his word as gospel. He told me later in Stockholm that Finland and the U.S.S.R. were at one time within an inch of reaching an agreement on terms desired by the Kremlin, if they didn't actually reach it.

Indeed Elliston seemed to think, and this I have heard from others, that the Finns had agreed to accept the Soviet conditions—in return, don't forget, for important territorial and other concessions in Soviet Karelia, bordering Finland—and that their decision was in process of being communicated to Moscow, when somewhere something slipped. By one account, it was simply delay in transmission, which occurs frequently in Eastern Europe, as reporters know to their cost. By another, Zdanof, or the Leningrad High Command or someone, grew impatient, and thought to hurry the Finns by sending a bomb-squadron to Helsinki. And some of the bombers got excited and dropped bombs, which did little damage but made the Finns fighting mad and killed any hope

of a deal. Another version is that the Nazis in Helsinki kept bolstering the Finns and saying the Kremlin was bluffing, and that they would take care of the Finns, and the Kremlin wouldn't dare. . . .

Perhaps there were parts of truth in every one of these stories, but I think that the heart of the truth was an error by the Kremlin, which apparently felt sure the Finns couldn't and wouldn't fight. The Kremlin, it seems, had been led to believe by its diplomatic representatives in Finland, and by Finnish Communist refugees in Moscow and their "underground" Comrades in Finland, that nine-tenths of the Finnish people disliked and distrusted their rulers to such a degree that they would welcome a move by the Red Army to help them throw out said rulers. This would appear to put the onus for rupture on the U.S.S.R., and I think that's where it belongs, although it is not unlikely that the Nazis had somewhere a finger in the pie. They were sharp enough to suppose that a clash of the U.S.S.R. with Finland would add tenfold height to the barrier already existing between the U.S.S.R. and the Western democracies.

But now the Kremlin slipped and messed up

the Finnish affair. It got caught in a needless war which intensified, if that were possible, its ill-renown in France, Britain, and the United States, and branded it more than before as a co-aggressor with Hitler.

It was ludicrous to see how the Kremlin floundered, how its press squeaked feebly about the danger of Finland as an outpost of possible Anglo-French attack, when everyone in Moscow, including the writers of this nonsense, knew that France and Britain couldn't raise a finger to help Finland, much less use it as an outpost for attack. They couldn't help Poland or Finland, and the help they sent later to Norway was not, shall I say, much use. We knew and the Russians knew that the potential foe behind Finland to which Moscow newspapers referred was not France or Britain, but Germany. It was fear of a German attack that compelled the Kremlin to push backward the Finnish frontier and disarm the Mannerheim Line, for exactly the same reason that it thrust its frontiers westward in Bessarabia, Poland, and the Baltic States.

The Kremlin's greatest mistake in this affair was a grave misjudgment of the temper, spirit, and

courage of the Finnish people, which rose as one man and woman to defend its country's soil. Great Britain committed the same error forty years before in its struggle with the Boers, when it thought that those "ignorant farmers" would be swept aside like chaff by a couple of British divisions, and found to its horror that the Boers had almost succeeded in driving into the sea the whole British Army in South Africa.

The Kremlin made an even worse guess; it thought that the "oppressed Finnish proletariat" would receive with open arms the "Soviet liberators." I know for a fact that the first Red detachments in Finland advanced with bands playing and banners labeled "To our Finnish Comrades, Greeting," and "We Shake the Hand of Free Finland." They advanced in open order, straggling along the roads. And were rudely surprised to be met by grenades and machine-guns. They didn't expect a fight, and that is the truth and the trouble. They also didn't expect the kind of winter that Finland showed them that year. Fifty degrees below zero, to freeze tanks and mechanical transport. It was just like the British and Boers, or David killing Goliath. And the rest of

the world was misled, and said, "Oh, it is just what we thought, it is all the effects of the Purge. The Red Army is only a bluff, little Finland is beating the Giant."

That opinion became so universal and so firmly established that no one seemed to appreciate what happened in February and March when the Soviet mustered its might and drove over the Mannerheim Line as a tank drives over a pill-box. In fact it was just like that, and it took them less than three weeks. They brought from the Far East six crack divisions, two panzers and four mechanized, six double divisions, each twenty thousand men, who had learned the war game in two successive campaigns against the Japanese.

It may be news to you, Reader, that the battle of Lake Khasan, or Chanakufeng as the Russians call it, on the Russo-Manchukuo border south of Vladivostok, lasted longer and was bloodier and engaged more men than Gettysburg. Its result was indecisive, except that for the first time in Russo-Japanese history the Japanese abandoned a battlefield and later agreed to its possession by the U.S.S.R. So I say these Siberian troops were "blooded" and knew what war meant, as

they proved to the Finns in short order. Not only the Germans in Spain learned how to conduct a blitzkrieg. General Stern and his Siberians blasted the Mannerheim Line with dive-bombers and tanks and guns and infantry trained to follow.

Then Finland sued for peace, and, surprisingly, the Kremlin asked little more than its terms before the war began—a frontier somewhat more distant, the Mannerheim Line disarmed, and the occupation by Soviet units of strategic points like the island of Hango. The Russians had won hands down, once they really turned on the heat; but their final success did not avail to correct the initial impression of failure. The Western world believed that the Russo-Finnish campaign had proved what it always suspected, that the execution of the "Generals" in 1937 and the Purge afterwards had so demoralized the Red Army that as a fighting force it was henceforth contemptible. Kaiser Wilhelm II, like Hitler after him, made the same mistake about Britain; but Hitler also made the mistake about Russia, which perhaps was the graver mistake.

I was in Moscow during the latter part of the Finnish War, but what with the Soviet censorship

and the extreme reluctance of American readers to hear anything but ill of Russia and the Red Army, I didn't get very far. I did, however, gather that German military circles failed to share the American and British opinion of the weakness of the Red Army, which makes it all the more surprising that Hitler attacked so recklessly last June, and perhaps justifies reports that he acted against the wish of his military advisers.

I thought too that I detected an interesting—and it seemed to me characteristic—reaction of the Soviet public to the Finnish War. A patriotic reaction. People didn't seem to care for the rights or wrongs of the case. They said, "We are fighting Finland; the Finns then are our enemies, and to hell with them." Everyone knew that behind the Finns was hidden a greater foe, and most people seemed to know that he wasn't British or French. They didn't say openly "Germans"; they said, "Can't you understand that the frontier must be pushed back? That Leningrad cannot remain at the mercy of foreign attack?" They seemed to sense what was coming, and in their deep preoccupation with future danger had no compunction or pity for Finland's gallant resistance. They

talked of the Mannerheim Line and said it must be smashed, and when it was smashed they were glad, but not unduly surprised.

To me at that time the common people of Moscow gave a useful object lesson. I perceived that they had recovered from the ill effects of the Purge and had made up their minds in terms of "My country, right or wrong." I don't much like the implication of this phrase, but a nation that says it and means it has guts and will fight for its own. A nation like that will fight, as the Russians have fought against Hitler. Whatever foreign observers or military attachés may have thought and reported to their governments, the Kremlin must have been encouraged by the tone of the Soviet masses during the Finnish War.

As one looks at it all with hindsight, I suppose that the Finnish campaign must have opened Hitler's eyes to the fact that the U.S.S.R., which he doubtless despised and thought that he could twist around his finger, had a purpose and will of its own. Because whether you like him or not, Hitler is far from a fool, and never made a mistake until June 22, 1941. Unless you call his "beer-hall rebellion" in Munich in the old days a mis-

take. Of course he might have been shot, and nearly was, in that fracas. And might have been shot by the Court which instead condemned him to political imprisonment. But that was a risk to take, and Hitler has never feared risks. Another man greater than he—far greater and more successful, Mohammed, the Prophet of Allah—began with a similar flop, a silly, ridiculous flop. But both of them lived it down.

Hitler cannot have failed to perceive, by this time, the Kremlin's game, its need for the outer marches, the skirmish grounds, and the glacis. But he had other fish to fry. The ink was hardly dry on the Russo-Finnish Peace Treaty, when Hitler struck at Norway, the beginning of his drive to conquer Europe. From Oslo to Brussels and Paris it was one swift march of conquest, unequaled since Napoleon and hardly equaled by him. For a moment it seemed likely that Britain too might collapse; but Dunkirk answered that, and the fact that the Nazis were unable or unready to attempt an invasion of Britain.

How the Kremlin must have sweated during those summer months, as it watched Hitler racing ahead to the mastery of Europe! The Kremlin

acted promptly. In July it issued a decree which virtually conscripted all Russian labor for war work. The Kremlin's answer to Hitler, although no one judged it as such. I mean that the date is important; this decree was passed in July, when Hitler seemed to be winning. It ordained that all Russian workers, employees, and peasants on collective farms were henceforth held to their jobs as tightly as soldiers to duty. Their discipline and obedience must be no less complete than that of mobilized troops; the law was so sudden and sharp that it hardly mentioned penalties.

In substance, the Kremlin said to the labor unions and the peasants: "We might mobilize you in this hour of emergency and take you away from your homes and make you live in barracks and do what you are told and jump when you hear an order, and pay you five cents a day and your keep and an allowance for your families. But we don't want to do it like that. We prefer that you should live at home and draw your regular wages, with extra for overtime and a bonus for any shift that accomplishes more than its quota. The same applies to the peasants, if only they know it and work. Because that is the point: you must work,

the whole lot of you, workers and peasants. We demand the best of your work."

The labor unions and collective farms replied that they would work their heads off for the Kremlin and their country, and much preferred working like that, sleeping at home and drawing full wages with extra pay for overtime, to mobilization and barracks and five cents a day and allowances for their families. So that was how it was settled. But most of the foreign observers in Moscow still persisted in the thought that this decree was yet an added yoke upon the neck of the Soviet masses which surely would increase their hate and distrust of the Kremlin.

(I should like to mention here, *en passant,* that all workers and employees of the Soviet Union nowadays receive regular wages with extra for overtime, and bonuses, etc., for good work, just as in a capitalist country. In fact, the system might more accurately be described as State capitalism, rather than socialism. Everyone can spend money as he or she pleases, except that there is great shortage of goods and commodities owing to the terrific pressure of war orders.)

There was one striking exception to foreign

pessimism about the new labor decree. Sir Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador, paid more attention than his colleagues to the startling improvement in all production indexes which took place in the autumn and winter of 1940-41. At the end of February he made the most successful prophecy that I have ever encountered. He had just returned from Stamboul, from a conference with the British Generalissimo, Sir John Dill, and Mr. Anthony Eden, the Foreign Minister, and received the British and American press for an off-the-record talk. As we were leaving, the Ambassador said suddenly: "Wait a minute, there is something else I'd like to tell you. I am convinced that Hitler will attack this country before the end of June."

We all of us gasped for breath; we knew that on various occasions the Kremlin had indirectly shown pique over the German occupation of Rumania and Bulgaria, which meant the north coast of the Black Sea, but there had been no serious cause of complaint or friction between the two countries, either about Soviet deliveries to Germany or on political grounds. Cripps continued imperturbably, "Hitler will not dare to

wait, because he knows that the Soviet industrial progress and defense preparations are advancing too rapidly. You think he will strike at England first, and as I told you confidentially, General Dill appears to agree with you. But I say that Hitler must deal with this country first, and that he will launch an attack not later than the end of June."

There were other indications, if I had had the wit to recognize them. Ominous reports of German troop movements into—the Germans said "through"—Finland; and a curious communiqué issued to the Soviet press which purported to allay public anxiety about reported heavy German troop concentrations in Eastern Europe, but which might also have served as a warning. Finally, there was something I saw myself on the journey from Moscow to Vladivostok. For several days I shared a compartment with a captain in the Red Army Frontier Guard, the long-term-service forces which act as permanent garrison for the Maritime Provinces bordering Japanese-controlled territory. We became quite friendly talking about this war and the last, and he gave me a vivid description of the battle of Lake Khasan in which he had taken part. One day, somewhere near

Chita, I remarked, "I've seen several troop trains going westward. I suppose the boys are going home for Easter leave."

"Oh no," said the Captain simply. "We're moving troops west all the time. The Japs, you see, will be good, we've taught them a lesson—two lessons—and besides, they're bogged down in China. We know we can hold this section with the Frontier Guard and the territorial divisions."

I stared at him in surprise. "Do you mean," I asked, thinking of Cripps, "that you expect the Germans will . . ."

"Not just yet, but"—he shrugged his shoulders—"it's bound to come sooner or later . . . you know what Hitler has said."

A week earlier, on the same journey, I had passed the train of Matsuoka on his way to Moscow, Berlin, and Rome. I discovered later that the chief purpose of his trip was not to reaffirm his pact with the Axis, which was growing less popular in Japan, but to sign a nonaggression agreement with the U.S.S.R. Despite unconfirmed reports of Japanese troop movements northward since Hitler invaded Russia, there has been no attempt by the Japanese to attack the Maritime

Provinces, although I think this may be due less to the Frontier Guard and territorials than to the Japanese fear of giant bombers from Vladivostok, which could burn up the flimsy wood and paper cities of Japan in one windy night.

Cripps called the turn to a week. On June 22 Hitler struck without warning, ultimatum, or any preliminary discussion, to the amazement of the world. I was staying on Long Island that night, and I confess that when John Gunther rang me up after midnight from the N.B.C. headquarters to tell me the news and say that they wanted me to come in and make a broadcast—which I was unable to do—I could hardly believe my ears. I had deduced from the history of Napoleon and the general historical parallel that an ultimate clash between the Soviet and the Nazis was inevitable; but never for a moment did I suppose, nor did any of us in Moscow who heard the British Ambassador's statement, that it would really come so soon. Later, when I happened to be talking with the Soviet Ambassador, Konstantin Umansky, in Washington, I told him that and said: "Weren't you surprised yourself?"

He replied, "I certainly was, although I knew that the clouds were darkening."

"But was there no ultimatum?" I persisted. "No grumbling about Soviet deliveries and so forth?"

"To the best of my knowledge, none," said Umansky firmly. "The attack was made without warning, in Hitler's own treacherous manner. But he will pay for this wicked deed. I have full confidence in the might and courage of the Red Army, and you can tell everyone that I said so."

X. THE U.S.S.R. AT WAR

MY SUBSEQUENT INQUIRIES have confirmed what Mr. Umansky said. There had been no apparent rift in Soviet-Nazi friendship, no complaints about the quality or quantity of Soviet deliveries, no political recriminations, nor any preliminary warning. Indeed, it is a fact that the Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotof, and the German Ambassador von Shulenberg, dined together in Moscow only one or two nights before the Nazi invasion. The atmosphere was cordial, and toasts were exchanged to the continuance of friendship and co-operation. Strangely enough, the Kremlin, with all its proneness to

suspicion, is inclined to believe that von Shulenberg was acting in good faith and was unaware of Hitler's intention to strike.

In fact, I think *no one* knew it save Hitler and his nearest advisers, military and civil, until twenty-four hours before "zero." You know how general staffs operate: they work out a series of plans for any presumed contingency. Hitler's armies were in position, massed and ready across Europe, from Norway and the Channel coast, along the Russian frontier, to the gates of Turkey. His Staff would have, say, "Plan A," all prepared for invasion of Britain; "Plan B," for invasion of Turkey; "Plan C," for invasion of Russia; and perhaps in the background "Plans D and E," for a dash through Spain at Gibraltar, or a drive from Tripoli at Suez. When once his mind was made up, he had only to press the button and say, "Plan C in effect at such-and-such an hour."

With all due respect to Sir Stafford Cripps and the time-accuracy of his forecast, I still do not believe that the reason he gave was Hitler's principal motive for attacking the U.S.S.R. I think that Hitler felt sure, like Napoleon before him, that Russia was a "pushover," and that he would have

forced the Kremlin to sign an ignominious peace ere the leaves had fallen from the trees of Moscow's parks. Cripps was doubtless right in part, that Hitler recognized the Soviet industrial progress, although perhaps he esteemed it less highly than did the British Ambassador, and that he also realized that his plans for a New Order in Europe could not successfully be carried out without the full support or submission of the U.S.S.R., rather than a tolerance which was gradually becoming more negative, as Soviet action in Bessarabia, Poland, the Baltic States, and Finland had already shown.

He was not blind, moreover, to the significance of the Soviet nonaggression pact with Japan and the earlier, if abortive, agreement with Yugoslavia. The Soviet note of reassurance to Turkey, and the curt reminder to Bulgaria that its admission of German troops would not make for peace in the Balkans, were also marks of restiveness which Hitler could not ignore. He may perhaps have felt that an all-out blow against Britain was dangerous so long as the U.S.S.R. retained full liberty of action, although, with all deference to Sir John Dill and Mr. Churchill, it is my opinion

that Hitler abandoned the plan of British invasion, except maybe as a last despairing coup or forlorn hope, when he moved his armies southward against Greece and Yugoslavia.

If Hitler knew as he did how hard Britain now was to crack, and saw as he did the "majestic momentum" of the United States, he must have known that his plans for a rapid victory were unfeasible, and that henceforth he must face a long, stern struggle, for which the resources of Western Europe, however surely he controlled them, would be inadequate. In that case he would need free access to Soviet foodstuffs, oil, and other raw materials. All that is probable enough, and doubtless served as secondary motives in Hitler's mind, but I am sure that the dominant factor was his conviction that the Russians would break like the French.

What if his generals voiced doubts? He had proved them wrong before, from the days of his march into the Rhineland. If his calculations were right—they always had been—he might rapidly secure the real Lebensraum which Germany coveted, not in lands across the seas, but in a region which adjoined his own possessions.

My friend John Cooper Wiley, lately U.S. Minister to Latvia and Estonia, one of the ablest American diplomats, who knows Prussia backwards, has told me his opinion that a cardinal reason for Hitler's attack on the Ukraine was land-hunger of the Prussians, who contrasted their sparse and sandy acres with the boundless expanses of the Soviet black earth region. What prospect could be more delectable—a collective farm with Soviet helots to work it, as the prize of each Prussian officer, and plump jobs as stewards and bosses for Prussian non-coms and soldiers?

Here Hitler, he thought, might win his war, and win it quick. To shatter the Red Army, as he had shattered the armies of France; to blast Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev with bomb-planes as he had blasted Rotterdam; to take if need be the Soviet capital as he had taken Warsaw, Copenhagen, Oslo, Brussels, the Hague, Paris, Bucharest, Sofia, Belgrade, and Athens. To occupy the Ukraine and the Donetz Basin and the rich grain and cattlelands of the North Caucasus, with the oilfields of Baku beyond; then to turn and say to the British, "It's enough. I offer you peace." A rosy and tempting vision, with nothing to prevent

its coming true save the Red Army, which Hitler —and for that matter the most renowned military and diplomatic experts of Britain and the United States—believed to be impotent and demoralized.

Once more there creeps a note of fantasy into this sober historical narrative. I refer to the Hess affair. As everybody knows, Rudolf Hess was closer to Hitler than anyone, except perhaps Goering, and had been appointed Vice-Fuehrer. Yet suddenly, in the second week of May, this eminent Nazi grabs a plane and flies headlong westward, to crash on the Scottish coast. How much ink has been spilled over Hess, what far-fetched and frivolous conjectures!

But the truth is simple enough. Hess surely was flying to Ireland, the one place in all the world that he could reach in a Messerschmitt plane without loss of his personal liberty, or any fear that he would be handed back to the tender mercies of Hitler. The facts can speak for themselves. There were bullet-holes in Hess's plane, although he had encountered no British fliers on his way. The German Propaganda Ministry announced his flight with incoherent claims that he'd gone mad, had been mad some time, had finally proved his mad-

ness by leaving the sort of letter for his Fuehrer that no sane Nazi could write.

At that season of the year the prevailing winds at high altitudes are westerly. So they were head-on against Hess's plane, and its tank when it crashed was empty, although only forty miles, a quarter-hour's flying, remained to the Irish coast. Why Hess fled is another story, but Otto Tolischus, now *New York Times* correspondent in Tokyo, who knows Germany better than most, was convinced that his hurried exit must be connected with the arrest a few days earlier of Friedrich Minoux, the greatest coal operator in Germany since the death of Hugo Stinnes. "In short," said Tolischus, "Hess fled to escape the fate of Ernst or Roehm or von Schleicher, who perished in Hitler's Purge."

But this Hess was a crafty dog, and when he looked at the gauge and saw he must land in Scotland, he began to think and thought quick. He may really have known or guessed that Hitler was nibbling at the bait of a drive into Russia. He certainly must have felt that if he presented himself as Hitler's emissary to the British, whether they believed him or not, he would receive more consideration than if he came as a fugitive. That

might mean a concentration camp, and Hess as a leading Nazi knows what concentration camps can be like—in Germany at least, and the countries Germany rules.

So Hess landed and broke his ankle, and when they picked him up and examined him, he told them his tale. It was cunningly thought out, about Hitler's plans against Russia, which might be good news to the British, and on this unsure foundation Hess built an elaborate scenario for the sort of peace talk to which Mr. Chamberlain might have listened, such as, "Allow us to smack the Russians; England never liked the Russians, either Tsarist or Bolshevik Russians. You will find the Fuehrer reasonable. He will be ready, you can count on it, to restore Europe to prewar conditions or nearly so, an independent Poland and Czechoslovakia, somewhat reduced no doubt in territory, but independent, and of course the withdrawal of German troops from Norway and Denmark, France, Holland, Belgium, and Greece." Chamberlain might have bitten, but Churchill didn't bite, although he did say later that he warned the Russians.

When the Russo-German War began, there were self-styled experts on Soviet affairs who pro-

fessed to doubt whether the Russians would fight at all, and at least one of my former colleagues from Moscow committed himself to the statement that only two blows would be struck: first, Hitler hitting Stalin, second, Stalin hitting the floor. I treated this rubbish with scorn, because it was clear that resistance depended in the first instance upon morale, the morale of the Kremlin, the morale of the Army, and the morale of the Soviet people; and I had no cause to detect weakness in any of the three.

Stalin and his associates may be less brilliant talkers, writers or theorists than Lenin and the "Old Guard," but they had given ample proof of doggedness and courage under years of terrific pressure. If there is one quality above others which distinguishes Stalin, it is tenacity or perseverance: an almost inhuman capacity to take punishment and bide his time and await the psychological moment. I had no misgivings about the Kremlin. It had been expecting this war and preparing for it since 1933, and I knew that Stalin and his Politburo were the last men in the world to shrink from resolute action or flinch in the face of danger.

In regard to the Red Army, I had taken pains to collect all possible information about the Finnish campaign, and it soon became obvious that however the High Command might have erred in its estimate of Finnish resistance and in the duration of the struggle, the Red Army, especially General Stern and his Siberians, had fully redeemed its errors in the final onslaught. All in all, it can be reckoned that fully three-quarters of a million Red troops were engaged in the Finnish War, and every soldier knows the enormous difference between veteran or blooded troops and a force which has never heard shots fired in anger. The first battles of the American War of Secession illustrate this factor beyond cavil, yet the armies of both sides later fought with a stubbornness and gallantry that has few parallels in history.

In addition, I had gathered from my train companion, the Frontier Guard captain, that upwards of another three-quarters of a million must have seen action in the Far East in the two "incidents" on the Manchurian and Mongolian borders. There would doubtless be overlapping, but the Russians must have at least a million, perhaps a million and a quarter troops with war experience.

Then, too, there was the lesson of Spain, where Red Army staff officers, airmen, artillerists, tankists and transport units served in relays for more than two years.

The vital factors in the morale of an army are experience and discipline. The Red Army had had the first in plenty, and from what I had seen at parades and learned from foreign military observers at Soviet maneuvers, there were no complaints about discipline. The Red Army was better clothed, fed, and housed than the average civilian, and whereas in Tsarist days the departure of recruits summoned annually from the villages was a day of national mourning, it had now become a joyous occasion celebrated with feasting, songs, and banners. I have no doubt that the Army had been seriously affected by the Purge, but three years had elapsed since then, and at that it is not so sure that the average doughboy sheds tears when he learns that one of his officers, even so high as a general, has been "axed." Indeed, one of the first moves of General Pershing as Commander-in-Chief of the A.E.F. was to "axe" a large number of ranking officers, which caused a certain uproar, but not in the ranks of the Army.

Finally, the Red Army, like the Kremlin, had been awaiting this war for years and preparing for it intensively, especially in the areas behind the former frontier from Odessa to Leningrad, where literally millions of men had worked to organize a defense zone, not a steel-and-concrete line like the "Maginot," but an elastic system of fortifications, artillery positions, land-mines and tank-traps and great underground depots, from twenty to fifty miles deep.

The Red Army had received, moreover, the cream of a nationwide campaign of patriotic propaganda which began in 1935 or thereabouts and gained in strength with every year. Through the press, radio, theatre, schools, speeches, and every available medium, the idea of patriotism was impressed upon the Soviet public. To illustrate my meaning, in 1934-35 the word "Rodina"—"birth land"—was substituted for the phrase "Socialist Fatherland" which had been current since the Revolution. Thenceforward the idea of international socialism and the universal brotherhood of workers was not wholly abandoned but increasing stress was laid upon the duty of each Soviet citizen to love and work for his coun-

try and fight for it when the time came. Music, theatre, and motion pictures took a progressively nationalist tone.

A picture was made of Tsar Peter the Great, who first tried to modernize Russia, and who conquered the Swedish invader, Charles XII, at Poltava. And of Prince Alexander Nevsky, who defeated the Teutonic Knights of the Sword in a battle near Novgorod. Both films were greeted with enthusiasm by packed houses throughout the country. The most potent of all agencies was radio, through which could be gauged most readily the steadily rising effect of patriotic appeal.

I think too that a great but not unnatural mistake was made by foreign observers who believed that the severities and miseries of the collective farm campaign, which cost countless lives, had alienated the peasants irreparably from the Kremlin. I had one foreign friend who repeated like a parrot that full mobilization would be impossible in the U.S.S.R. because the Kremlin would never dare to arm soldiers mainly drawn from the peasantry lest they turn their guns against their rulers. He did not understand the sad but realistic fact that all those who had opposed collective farming

in the villages were dead or exiled, and that the collective farms were now owned by those who had not opposed them, or had been for them from the outset.

Once more it was the old story, that "Dead men cannot bite," and in the border regions especially, the very deportations and arbitrary removal of "doubtful elements" which roused the indignation of foreigners, proved a source of strength when the test came. The Kremlin had followed a policy of settling young reservists and their families in these areas in communal or collective farms whose buildings were made of concrete, well adapted to defense, with prepared "fields of fire" for machine-guns, and barbed-wire fences. Thus a network of something like "blockhouses" was established near the frontiers, and the collective or communal farmers in these regions, from adults to boy and girl scouts, were regularly trained for the guerilla warfare which has proved so costly to the Germans. By this time, too, the collective farm system was beginning to function smoothly and efficiently. This was chiefly done by education and an ingenious method of control through the Machine Tractor Stations. It is

enough to say that the harvest of 1940 had far surpassed all previous records in everything, grain, cotton, flax, sugar, meat, fruit, and vegetables.

What foreigners failed to realize, and Hitler amongst them, was the deep and abounding love of Russians for their country, their Rodina, their birth land. All Russians, not only Soviet Russians. I have talked with scores of emigrés, from the Grand Duchess Marie to drivers of Paris taxicabs, and every one of them has said, often in the midst of the most violent outbursts against the Bolsheviks, "If only I could go back, do you think I could ever go back?" Right here in America there are tens of thousands of ex-Russians, many of whom suffered dreadfully from the Revolution, in person and property and loss of relatives and all that they held dear; but I know that there are few today who do not sympathize with Russia in its struggle and whose hearts have not been exalted by its dogged resistance to Hitler.

Not long ago I addressed an audience of ten thousand people in a San Francisco auditorium on behalf of British and Russian War Relief. A bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church, in full canonicals, was sitting on the platform with rep-

resentatives of a dozen different Russian organizations and societies. When I said, with full conviction, that every Russian was a patriot at heart, and that even those who had had to leave their country were, I felt sure, in sympathy with its gallant struggle, I was startled by the roar of applause. Although I had not known it, a fifth or more of the audience were so-called "White" Russians or their children, and dozens of them flocked to the platform afterwards to tell me how right I had been about their sentiments.

An unsuspected source of Soviet strength has been the U.S.S.R., Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, as compared with the Russia of the Tsars. The States or Federations of the Union are sovereign to a degree beyond those of America, in that they possess the constitutional right of secession. But they are held together unbreakably by the cement of the Communist Party and its junior affiliations, which control everything so thoroughly that I imagine any "national chauvinist," as the Russians term overzealous local patriots, would have, and indeed has had, an abrupt and sticky end. The States do enjoy, however, local autonomy and the use of national customs (and

costumes), language, press, theatre, and so forth, to an extent no Tsar would have countenanced. In the drive for national patriotism, local patriotism was not ignored, and I make bold to say that the peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, of the farthest North and East, feel that this is their own war against Hitler with no less fervor than the "Great Russians" of Leningrad, the "White Russians" of Smolensk (White Russia is the name of a region—Bielorussia—and has nothing to do with "white" as applied to "White" exiles), or the "Little Russians" of the Ukraine, who are bearing the brunt of the battle.

Apropos of this rather confusing business about "Whites" and "White Russia," may I cite a plaintive remark by one of the Soviet diplomats in Washington. He said, "Really, Mr. Duranty, I don't think your newspapers are quite fair to us. Why is it they always insist on calling us the 'Reds'? I fear that despite the President's speeches and the visits to Moscow of Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Harriman, your newspapers are still possessed by a reactionary and unfriendly spirit."

I replied without a smile, "You will forgive me, but you are wrong. The fact of the matter is that

the short word 'Reds' fits perfectly into headlines. No caption writer in the country could resist a word like that. Besides," I added, "don't you call it 'Red Army' yourselves? Not just the 'Soviet Army,' or 'U.S.S.R. Army,' but '*Red* Army'?"

That held him, but I may add that the word "red" in Russian has no revolutionary connotation. The word in Russian is "krasny," which has the same root-derivation as the word "kraseevy"—"beautiful"—because red is the color of life, and sun, and warmth in the blood, on the ice-bound Russian plains; and white is the color of death and mourning and frozen snow. To this day non-Communist funerals in Moscow are driven by white-draped horses, and the coffins and flowers are white, although Communists have adopted red and black as their mourning symbol; and the famous Red Square of Moscow means "lovely" or "beautiful" square, not the square that ran red with blood as once it did when Tsar Peter slaughtered the Streltsi, nor "Square of Revolution." That is why they call it "Red Army," meaning "splendid and glorious Army," the same meaning as Stephen Crane's, when he wrote his book, *The Red Badge of Courage.*

Not long before the Russo-German War began, Edgar Mowrer, of the *Chicago Daily News,* who for many years was the best of the American correspondents in Europe, especially in Germany, said to me in Washington, "I'll begin to say Hitler's slipping when the communiqués of German General Headquarters start telling lies about operations on land. I discount Nazi air and sea stuff, and of course the rantings of Goebbels and the D.N.B., but taking it by and large the Staff tells the truth about land." I was therefore rather alarmed when I read in the first week of the Soviet-German War bombastic reports from German Army Headquarters of immense captures or destruction of planes, tanks, heavy artillery, and other valuable equipment.

I did not yet realize that Hitler had taken command in person and that he, not the General Staff, was issuing communiqués in accordance with the principle which he invented and taught to Goebbels, that if you lie loud enough and often enough there'll always be mugs to believe you. I was afraid that the Red Army had yielded to overconfidence —a marked Russian trait which does not accord at all with the prevailing theory that they're all a

people of slaves and have been so since time immemorial—and had moved their heavy stuff out into the "skirmish zones" of the newly occupied territories. But I couldn't reconcile this with the character of Marshal Timoshenko, a farsighted and prudent strategist, nor of his Chief of Staff, Shaposhnikof, who was one of the most brilliant graduates of the Tsarist Staff College. I knew they had planned their war to utilize the skirmish zones for breaking up the panzer attack and slowing down the blitzkrieg, then to fight their real battle in the zones of prepared defense.

Yet those Nazi communiqués scared me, until I learned they were written by Hitler. After that I saw the picture more clearly. The ever-lengthening line of German communications and their tank columns driving through to claim town after town which they had reached but did not securely hold because the mass of their infantry was unable to keep pace. The Russians, it seems, had learned the same defense against tanks as the Romans used against Pyrrhus and his elephants, some three hundred years before Christ.

I like historical parallels, although I profess to distrust them; but this one truly enchants me. The

Roman legions outclassed the Greek soldiers of Pyrrhus, but they were thrown into such confusion by the charge of his elephants, which they labeled the "two-tailed monsters," that the Greeks were able to win two stiffly contested battles. Then the Romans thought of a plan. They ceased to oppose the elephants, but opened their ranks and let them through, and had special detachments ready to harass the elephants with lances and flaming arrows. Then the lines closed up, and the legions charged on the Greeks and beat them in equal combat.

The Red Army handled the panzers in nearly the same manner. Of course it had elephants too (I mean tanks), in numbers and size that approached the German total. But the Germans had the advantage of initiative and knowing where to attack, and the greater advantage of superior mobility through better transportation. Poor transportation has always been the weakness of Russian armies. I have talked with high-ranking officers of the last war, both Russian and German, and they agreed that there was hardly a major engagement where the Germans did not outnumber the Russians at the actual point of attack. Superior mo-

bility again, or as General Forrest remarked, battles are won by the side which "gets there the fustest with the mostest men." So there were many occasions where Nazi tanks went right through, to be harassed by "Molotof cocktails," or "bread-baskets," or similar "flaming arrows," while the Russians closed behind them to check the German infantry.

At this point I feel bound to question the accuracy of ex-Colonel Lindbergh's information about the Soviet Air Force. I happened to be in Moscow when the then Colonel Lindbergh arrived for a visit of five days. I know that he went, as I did, to a Soviet air meet and saw a lot of planes, which in Germany or the United States would have been considered obsolete, perform cumbrous evolutions. He visited, I was told, one of the aviation factories in Moscow and the central Soviet air experimental station. He talked with Soviet airmen, who entertained him royally. Of course mostly through interpreters, but some of them spoke English.

And that was all, just all. The rest of Lindbergh's time was spent in banquets or sightseeing. Now I have known army fliers and civilian fliers

too, in many countries and in peace and war, and I say without fear of contradiction that in no country and in no circumstances is there any group of men so patriotic everywhere, so enthusiastic and so utterly hostile to any thought of defeatism. Therefore, Lindbergh did not get and could not have got his pessimistic story about the Soviet Air Force from the Soviet fliers, any more than he got it from his personal observations. If you wish to know, he got it from the Germans, who doubtless knew better themselves, but wished for their own reasons to have him say what he did. The Red Air Force has shown in battle that it can vie with the Nazis in numbers, skill, and courage.

As I have said, it soon became clear that the Russians had not risked too much of their heavy equipment in the skirmish zones. As their armies slowly fell back, there came into play a factor which Hitler had not foreseen, the savage guerilla warfare of the men and women and boys and girls from the collective or communal farms. Seven-tenths of them were Communists, adult Party members, Komsomols (Communist Youth) or Pioneers (Communist boy and girl scouts). As the

German lines swept past them, they maintained in the woods and fields the ceaseless guerilla war for which they'd been put there and trained. Now far behind the Front, they are nibbling at the Nazi rear and at Nazi communications, with the same stealthy, tireless persistence that broke the hearts of Napoleon's marshals in Spain. It was on this account that the Kremlin re-introduced the system of Commissars in the Red Army, which had been abandoned after the Finnish War, in order that these half-military, half-civil officers might co-ordinate and direct civilian guerilla warfare.

Resistance of this kind was naturally most effective in the thickly-wooded areas of the North and Northwest, which explains why the major Nazi successes have been gained in the Central and Southern Ukraine, one vast flat open grain-field, where planes have full visibility and there is no cover for counter-attacks or guerilla fighters.

In this section the Russians are exposed, but soon there will come to their aid Russia's best and oldest allies, General Mud, General Slush, and greatest, old General Winter. From West Poland right on to the Urals, all Russia is as flat as your

hand, without a mountain barrier to check the icy blasts which sweep down from the Arctic Ocean. The first snows in Moscow fall in the latter part of September, and then the winter begins with gathering intensity. October and November are the months of bitter blizzards, when a dozen hours can pile snowdrifts high as a man.

It isn't bitterly cold, not lower than zero Fahrenheit, but the wind can cut like a knife on those desolate endless plains. I know it, I have felt it, and still feel cold at the thought. A climate like Minnesota, and if you don't know what that is, ask your friends from Minnesota how they would define a blizzard. In October and November weather alternates, colder and warmer, and the fat black earth of the Ukraine turns to slush and gumbo waist-deep. The real cold comes after Christmas, January and February, way below zero, thirty or forty below; but by that time the streams and marshes and lakes are frozen solid, to carry the heaviest tank. If the Nazis have furs enough, and food enough, and heart enough, they may find that the coldest months are the best for their panzer attacks; but let them never forget another stout ally of Russia, General Cootie, the

prevalent louse, who bears typhus in his bite. If only the truth were known, it was he who defeated Napoleon.

I regard prophets with distrust, and prophecy with dismay, but I am tempted, in conclusion, to say something about the prospects of the Soviet-German War. I know, as I said before, that the Kremlin has been preparing for this war for full seven years; that it has starved its people of consumers' goods in order to equip the Red Army and build new munition and armament plants. And build them eastward, remote from any possible attack by land or air. In the Ural Mountains they have built huge factories, the "Ural-Mash" at Sverdlovsk, the greatest agricultural machinery plant in Europe, now of course producing tanks and war materials. A steel plant which Gary might envy, at Novotagil. The metallurgic giant, iron and steel, at Magnetogorsk in the Southern Urals, and a chain of chemical factories, constructed under American supervision, in the Western Urals, which rivals Nazi Leuna or American Dupont. Behind that, far off in the East, is a bigger steel plant yet, which is greater than Krupps or Skoda—Kuznetsk, or Stalinsk as it's now called, fifteen

hundred miles east of the Urals. And farther still beyond that, the new cities of the coast, Khabarovsk, Komsomolsk, and Voroshilovsk, open steppe or fishing villages ten years ago, and today industrial centers that already have inhabitants by the hundred thousand and think that they soon will rival Pittsburgh or Detroit.

If the Russians are forced to retreat, which personally I rather question, they not only can retire upon their Ural and eastern industry, but towards the Volga and its tributaries, which is the most vital artery in all of the Soviet Union and ranks with the Mississippi as a vehicle of transport. Right now, as I write, every barge and boat on the Volga is bringing oil from the South, to provide there, if needs must be, the backbone of Soviet resistance should Moscow fall, and Leningrad and Kharkof.

In any case I know and the Russians know that they are the only people in history who can look back and declare with truth that the voluntary sacrifice and destruction of their national capital was the penultimate step to victory over a greater soldier than Hitler.

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