

THE SOVIETS EXPECTED IT

by

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FOREWORD

Whatever we Americans may have thought of the Soviet people, they hold today our own front line for our democracy, our science, our equality, for all we have ever held dear. On them has fallen the military defense of civilization and human freedom against the dark forces that threaten to put back the clock of the world.

Whether the Russians wanted it or whether they didn't, whether they intrigued with Hitler or shrewdly took time and territory for final defense, when the mortal hour struck they met it with a unity and valor unique among the battling nations. In taking up the challenge handed them by history, they have made it necessary for us to understand the Soviet people if we would save ourselves.

Most of all we must know that the Soviets expected it, and got ready for it and that they see a way through – not only to their own victory but to the great peace of the peoples, based on equality of all races and nations, on free access by the world's people to the world's resources, on democratic choice. For unless we understand the tremendous hope that rallies the Soviet people to this conflict, we shall not only fail our strongest ally, but may lose the battle for ourselves and for the world.

One :

Russians Are People

I never fell for this talk about the “mystery” of Russians. Russians are people! Like Americans! Like Chinese! People are very much alike and also very different. Whether you stress the likeness or the difference depends upon your aim. Hitler preaches the superior race of Germans; the American Declaration of Independence asserts that all men are created equal; while Jesus Christ proclaimed that we are all alike sinners and Sons of God.

The Russians never wanted to be a mystery. When I first went to Moscow twenty years ago this autumn they were explaining themselves in tomes of Marxist logic to all who would hear. Most people wouldn't; they called the explanations propaganda. When they were more polite they called them dreams. As H. G. Wells did with Lenin's mad dream of electrification propounded in the dark night of civil war. After a while the Russians stopped explaining. They let their actions speak.

Today their actions shout to a world in battle. They shout from the world's front lines. In the hot flame of those actions a thousand myths about the Soviet land are shrivelled: the myth of Russian backwardness, the myth of machinelike regimentation, the myth of a discontented peasantry burning to overthrow the Stalin regime. When the ultimate test of war tried the European peoples, the chief difference that appeared was that the Soviet people showed a unity, efficiency, and courage beyond others, and a more spectacular resistance to Hitler than any other land. They set alight a hope and confidence in final victory that seemed to have died from the continent of Europe.

I think what took me to Russia in the first place was that Russia seemed to continue and broaden the American tradition, not the tradition of today's supremely productive and somewhat disillusioned America, but that of the America I knew before the first World War. In that western land of my childhood a penny bar of candy was considered a treat; standards of living were crude as compared with today. But the one

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unforgivable crime was to fail to believe in human progress and to fail to boost it along as it came. Today in the U.S.S.R. the standard of living is crudely simple but the people have the faith that you search for almost in vain among the little lands of Europe. It is the faith that we human beings, by the twin tools of human co-operation and science, are able to conquer all problems presented by nature, even the problem of our own very backward souls.

Faith in a future grows in part from access to great natural resources. Thus it came to us Americans in the days when my forebears settled the Connecticut valley and drove on westward, seeking always the untamed land and the far horizons. Some of the similarities I have seen between Russians and Americans derive, I think, from a similar geography. American engineers who helped build the great industrial enterprises of the first Five Year Plan often remarked that only the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. have space adequate for mighty mass production within their own frontiers, and that this creates the sense of powerful and peaceful expansion.

When I come to Leningrad district and the woods of Soviet Karelia, it is always like a return to my homeland of Puget Sound. The same endless forests, pierced by a thin line of lonely railway; the same lavish use of timber in long rail fences across a rain-soaked wilderness. The people taming this wilderness wear shabby but durable clothes of the logger and miner and know how to make camp under any conditions like the men I knew in my youth. In the Crimea, I am reminded of the blue skies and sunny hills of California, close to blue water. The Crimean Tartars build against their climate homes of brightly painted clay, not very different from the adobe huts our Mexican farm laborers build. Kazakhstan recalls the great arid plains of Arizona, where, here and there, the touch of irrigation brings bountiful crops. Finally, the great Siberian plains, which lead to perpetual snow on the mountains at Lake Baikal, always recall the North Dakota plains and Montana uplands through which I have traveled so often to the snow peaks of our Northwest.

"Russians and Americans farm; the little nations of Europe garden," said Harold Ware, who brought the first American

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tractor unit to Russia in the great Volga famine of 1921-22. "This gives to Russians and Americans a similar expansive mentality." He added that the North Dakota boys who came with him to teach the Russians to run tractors noticed that Russian peasants had a brand of humor similar to their own: "A kind of rough, but non-malicious practical joking." He said further: "Russian farm boys have never seen tractors, but as soon as they see what a tractor will do, they have the same itch to get their hands on one and the same joyous recklessness in driving them that American boys have with the family car."

I like to think that today some of the Russian humor produced by the war resembles our American brand. It is not like British humor, based on understatement; it is based on cheerful guying and picturesque brag. Like Lozovsky's remark, "Hitler will see the Kremlin – but only on a picture postcard." Or his other statement: "The German army has started for Vladivostok. I suppose I should wish them a pleasant trip, for it will surely be a long one." I think Americans will laugh, as the people of Moscow did, when they see the Soviet newsreel in which a German prisoner of war is made to disgorge his loot and brings up last of all, after carefully unfolding the package, two bars of laundry soap! I am sure that the Russians would get the full flavor of that typically American slogan, "Cheer up, the worst is yet to come."

If I find many ways in which Russians resemble Americans, my Chinese friends tell me that Russians are like Chinese! I suppose that Russians – or let us be accurate now and say "the Soviet people" – are composed of so many nationalities that they have points of resemblance to most of the peoples in the world. In one of their early censuses they listed 182 different peoples, speaking 149 different languages. The U.S.S.R. is a melting pot of diverse nations, each with its own language, race, history, culture, religion, and political development. They range from recently nomad shepherds like Kazaks and Kalmucks to peoples of highly sophisticated culture like Armenians, Ukrainians, and Jews. They include Eskimos of the Arctic and Uzbeks of Central Asia, where less than twenty years ago the girls were sold in marriage and kept behind black veils or in harems all their lives. Russians are not only people;

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they are lots of different peoples.

The Revolution of 1917 knocked the shackles off all these different peoples and made them all equal citizens of the U.S.S.R. It set them all rushing in a mad speed of progress from the Middle Ages, or the primitive nomadic era or wherever else they started, toward the twentieth century and perhaps the twenty-first. All of these different peoples have about as much local autonomy as our forty-eight "sovereign states." If you get that picture, it will not surprise you to find that almost anything – any terrible backwardness or stupendous achievement – might be true somewhere in the U.S.S.R.

Titanic progress exists in the midst of old backwardness, a jumble of four centuries at once. I met farm women from northern Siberia who had never seen a railway train until they went to Moscow as deputies to the Soviet Congress – senators from their districts, no less. They were able women who had organized schools and hospitals in a dozen counties. They could tell you sharply how badly the men used to run things in the old days when it was manly to get drunk and beat your wife.

I have sat in a managerial conference on a big state farm of a couple of hundred thousand acres in the Ukraine. It had a three-shift division of labor and more tractors and harvesters than any farm in America has. But their problem that evening was the difficulty of fixing the change in the night shift in the complete absence of clocks!

Americans in Moscow hotels often grumble over atrocious plumbing. Yet Moscow has also the most scientific garbage disposal in the world. All the waste of this great city of more than 4,000,000 people is first used in "biothermal processes" which heat large "greenhouse farms" from underground. When the garbage and sewage is thoroughly rotted in this quite odorless manner, it is then used as fertilizer for ordinary farming. This amazing development got no advertising whatever. I merely chanced upon it when I visited a farm. On the same afternoon, I stopped at the Moscow Central Telegraph and saw some twenty people drawing up their "phototelegrams" to send to their friends. This is something that Western Union does not yet offer to ordinary Americans. Yet it occurs in a country

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which has periodic shortages of clothing and shoes.

In a land of such contrasts, it is not surprising that many misconceptions arise. Whenever I hear, for instance, that old charge that the Soviets attack religion, I recall the vast varieties of religions I have seen in that land. They include, of course, the various religious wars in the Caucasus between Turks and Armenians and the religious practices of Central Asia, where barely ten years ago Mohammedan mullahs incited the people to cut girls to pieces for the sacrilege of advocating women's rights.

I shall leave it to my friend, the Dean of Canterbury, as a specialist in religion, to convince you if he can that the Soviet system is "more Christian" than our capitalist world. I shall leave it to constitutional lawyers to decide how far freedom of religion can be given by a constitution; the Soviet Constitution as President Roosevelt has made clear* guarantees it as explicitly as ours. I content myself with one episode of an "attack on religion" as typical as any I know. In the 1930 drive for collective farming, I visited Molvitino County in Ivanovo Province, a typical Russian rural district if anything "typical" exists.

I sat in a congress of young folks who were organizing the most tremendous flax-sowing ever seen in those northern parts. They did it under the slogan of "beating the Holy Helena," the patron saint of flax. Saint Helena, the "flaxen-haired," was mother of Emperor Constantine and the region's chief saint. Her festival, apparently superimposed on that of some earlier pagan goddess, fixed the proper religious day for sowing flax. With the gradual retarding of the Russian Church calendar through centuries, this date came two weeks later than the time that the Department of Agriculture thought would bring the best results. Under the old system of peasant farming, nothing could be done to change the "flax-sowing day." The priests and the older peasants held out for Holy Helena, and the old men ruled the family farms.

The younger, educated lads got their first chance when collective farming came. They had a vote on the farm as good, and maybe a bit better, than anybody else. They mobilized every

* Press Conference, *N. Y. Times*, Oct. 1, 1941.

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kind of publicity, mass meetings, leaflets, slogans, and got most of the district sown early against the denunciations of the priests. The young farmers held a meeting to celebrate the "victory of science" and then sat tight and waited anxiously to see what the weather would do. Science is not infallible and weather is not perfectly predictable. Unseasonable frost might have sent the whole county back to "religion," with the priests all chortling, "We told you so!" Perhaps not all of the young folks, and certainly not their fathers, had broken with the Holy Helena in the secret depths of their souls. Fortunately for science, the warm spring rains came just after the early planting and those who planted betimes had the biggest crop ever seen.

With shouting and singing, the young farm leaders grabbed the county's single auto truck and started for the provincial capital to report success. I went with them all night through the rain, through the mud, through the dark. When the gasoline was gone, they made an outraged stationmaster let them on a freight train and wrote up their report sitting on a flat car in alternating sun and rain. Plastered with mud and walking the last four miles, they banged into the provincial capital, one of the first proud counties to report. Nothing, they knew, would ever stop them now! Religion – alias the Holy Helena – was gone! Every rural district in Russia had similar conflicts; twenty years ago the priests induced the peasants to stone the first tractors as "devil machines."

Today the traditional bearded, illiterate, superstitious Russian peasant has practically vanished. For quite awhile the New York newspapers have turned down pictures of Soviet farmers, since they don't look like peasants any more. Peasants have been replaced by these new, young, somewhat crude but thoroughly confident people who for twenty years have been growing in the womb of the Soviet land. The task of all revolutions is to make new people. Only so does the revolution in the end succeed. What are they like, these new, these "Soviet" people?

They are very young, in the first place. Younger, probably, than the dominant people in any other land today. Half of the Soviet population is under twenty-one. In this they resemble the America of fifty years ago, but not of today. Perhaps they resemble still more the America of the Jacksonian era, boiling

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with democratic energies, when we attacked the wilderness. The population's youth is partly due, as it was in that early America, to the hardships of war and hunger which shortened the life of older folk in previous years. It is due still more to the high birth rate which, combined with a falling death rate, makes the natural increase of population probably greater in the Soviet Union than in any other land.

Anyone who has lived in the U.S.S.R. knows that the young women all have jobs and they all marry young. There are practically no old maids in the land. Family life is simple and wholesome, and babies are taken as a pleasure and a matter of course. The babies themselves are far less nervous and high-strung than ours are. We had three at one time staying in my Moscow flat – my visiting stepdaughter's, my secretary's and my housemaid's; all of them together seemed to cause less commotion than one would in a New York apartment. The custom of the country takes babies easily as pioneer and vital people do.

This young population is very active physically, mentally, and in government tasks. They are self-reliant; it is a quality that starts young. Soviet schools encourage pupils to express their special tastes in both school and vacation activities. They are encouraged to develop special talents. Their universities have nearly twice as many hours of classroom work as our American colleges would stand; a youth I know was attending classes and laboratory work seven hours a day six days a week. The people travel far more than Europeans and possibly more than Americans. They certainly travel in far more uncomfortable ways. Their railways handle twice the passenger-miles that American railways do, yet with only half as many locomotives. That makes them four times as crowded. Soviet people of all ages will take ten-day trips to new jobs or to vacation resorts without a thought, sleeping on hard boards all the way. They are hardy; it is a quality that has survival value in war.

I once met twenty young "Arctic Explorers" about fifteen years of age. They were going to the Polar regions for a summer outing on a Murmansk train. Their energetic study of maps, northern peoples and Arctic cruises, carried on in different schools, had won from their teachers a recommendation to

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this organized cruise. A real Arctic explorer led their expedition and they expected to meet other Arctic explorers in the north who would take the kids seriously and tell them what polar exploring was all about. The highest authorities in the country are often called upon to explain things to children.

Ten of the best pupils in botany, aged fourteen to fifteen, made a similar expedition that summer to the Altai Mountains at government expense. They hiked well over a thousand miles and discovered twenty-seven new varieties of black currants, which they sent with great pride to the aged Michurin, the famous plant creator, the Burbank of Russia.

Soviet children begin to learn in the kindergarten to cooperate with others. Many of their building blocks are the size that can only be put in place by two children working at once. Later games are organized around some collective form of activity. Thus the children of railway workers in Tiflis built a regular children's railroad, half a mile long. It was a serious enterprise, run by children on their holidays. It carried passengers, collected fares and spent them to "expand the road" in the regular style of the Soviet Five Year Plan. There are many such children's railroads in the U.S.S.R.

What are the ideals of these young people? If it is not sufficiently clear from their education, an article in *Pravda*, chief organ of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., makes it very plain. Five years ago, when Hitler had made an impassioned speech to Nazi youth, demanding "unquestioning obedience to the Leader" as the highest virtue, *Pravda* broke into a long editorial that denounced the Nazi ideal and declared that the Soviet ideal was the exact reverse.

"Not submission and blind faith... but consciousness, daring, decision... strong and original individuality, inseparably connected with the strong collective of the working people." This was set up as the Soviet ideal. To people accustomed to think of the Soviet people as "regimented," the words may come as a surprise. But Stalin, in his first radio speech after the German attack, appealed to the "daring initiative and intelligence that are inherent in our people." The events of the war have shown that these were no careless words.

One recalls the guerrilla band which, lacking rifles,

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stopped Nazi ammunition trucks by spiked boards placed at night in the roads and then demolished them with homemade grenades. Or the Ukrainian farmer who crept up to a German armored car, using a camouflage of three sheaves of wheat; then shouting: "The robbers want our bread, let's give it to them," he threw the dry wheat under the car and set it afire by tossing a flaming bottle of gasoline after it, thus converting the car into blackened iron. Or the guerrilla detachment which captured six German planes, destroyed five of them, and sent the sixth to the Red Army, piloted by an amateur air enthusiast, who was a tractor driver in ordinary life.

Lt. Talalikhin's initiative is already a Soviet aviator's tradition. Exhausting his ammunition in a fight with three enemy planes, he rammed the tail of one enemy with his propeller, smashed the tail of another enemy plane with his wing tip, and then bailed out of his own plane safely. Moscow parks displayed the wreckage of the German planes, and other Soviet pilots quickly copied the tactics. An aviation technician, Konikov, won renown by attaching the fuselage of a plane he was repairing to the front platform of a military train whose locomotive had been bombed by the enemy; he thus pulled the most necessary parts of the train to safety. Railway repairman Sigachev poured water on his clothes and walked on a board into the furnace of a locomotive, raked the burning coals aside, and replaced in forty minutes some fire bars whose displacement would normally have halted the military train five hours.

These are a few of the pictures that flicker rapidly across the screen in the motion picture of the Soviet people's endless initiative. "The most valuable capital of our land is people," is a famous Stalin slogan.

I remembered those words when I heard that the Red Army had blown up the great Dnieper Dam and surrounding industries worth a quarter of a billion dollars all told. I know how the Soviet people loved that dam. I saw it three times during its building. I saw the workers competing on both sides of the river, putting up red stars at night to signal the progress of their work. That dam was the pride not only of its builders, but of the whole people. It symbolized Lenin's great dream of electrifying the land. It was everything that the Tennessee Valley

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Authority meant to our Southern States – the coming of modern light, modern power, modern industry to a backward land.

Millions of men and women went without meat and butter and clothes that the Dnieper Dam might be swiftly built. They said: “We tighten our belts to build our future!” But every Soviet citizen would blow it up swiftly rather than see it fall to Hitler and be used to enslave the Ukrainian people.

The greatest thing the Dnieper Dam produced was not power, not light. The greatest thing it made was people. Out of illiterate peasant laborers, the Dnieper Dam made modern mechanics. Out of a passive folk, sunk in the farming and superstitions of the Middle Ages, the Dnieper Dam made tens of thousands of men and women of initiative, conscious of their own power.

Hitler’s newspaper, the *Voelkischer Beobachter*, tried to explain the fighting temper of the Red Army by saying: “The Russians fight beyond human endurance because Communism has stamped all humanity out of them.” It is a rather odd slant on the war.

I think the Russians have a better slant. It may be propaganda, but it’s pretty good propaganda when the Russians at the front report that what surprises them most is the lack of individual initiative shown by the German “superior race.” They say that when German officers are killed, the rank and file shout for somebody to give them orders. When Germans are captured, they do not seem to know what they are fighting for.

One of the best anecdotes is that of a German corporal from Breslau who, when questioned by a Soviet reporter, said he didn’t know why the Germans had attacked the U.S.S.R.

“Don’t you read the newspapers?” asked a Red Army inquirer.

“No, I fulfil the orders of my superior,” said the man with the Nazi soul.

“Are you a human being or a machine?” persisted the Red Army representative.

The corporal stared for a moment at the unexpected question and then answered sullenly: “We are all of us machines.”

I don’t know whether he meant to refer to the German ar-

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my or expressed the wider philosophy that all men are puppets of fate. But I know those words would shock all Soviet people as the ultimate sacrilege, as the symbol of the slavery against which they war.

Russians know they are not machines. Russians know they are people. People who can make – and break – machines!

Two :

Something to Fight For

The first thing that surprised and impressed Americans as the Soviets entered the war was what Ben Hecht of *PM* called the “legend-making courage” of the Red Army and even of the civilian population. He added, “In their great battles, one felt not only the resistance of a strong-souled people to a conqueror, but their love for the thing they are defending.” Other correspondents made similar comments.

It had been fairly widely believed in America that Soviet peasants would not “die for Stalin” but would seize the chance to overthrow a hated regime. At the very least, they would remain passive under the change of masters in the traditional peasant way. The world was therefore amazed when all over the invaded districts Soviet farmers destroyed their own homes to prevent the Germans from using them, and then formed guerrilla bands – they seemed almost like suicide squads – to harry the invader.

Almost every news commentator immediately made the comparison with France. “The French Army was held as the best in the world,” said the Washington Merry-Go-Round. “Yet it collapsed in eleven short days... More important than Hitler’s panzer divisions, more important than Stuka dive bombers, was the fact that the French troops did not want to fight... Men in the trenches had no idea why they were fighting. If they knew anything, it was that they were fighting for the Comité des Forges (Steel Trust) or the Two Hundred Families that ruled the Bank of France... So France fell. One year later an entirely different story comes from Russia... Obviously, Russian troops are defending something which they cherish. They have had what the French lacked – morale.”

An ingenious explanation of why Soviet farmers willingly put the torch of destruction to their homes was proposed by a New York radio commentator.* He said it was due to “Communism,” that the peasants did not so much mind destroying

* Vandercook, Aug. 23, 1941, on NBC.

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things that belong to the government. He contrasted certain French villages whose mayors actually asked the French soldiers defending them to surrender to the Germans, lest battle come into the streets of the village and destroy their homes. Their little houses meant so much to the "French peasant's sense of private property," and they felt that one small village would not matter so much to France. This explanation is a rather startling commentary on what the sense of private property does to the chances of a nation's survival in modern war. But it hardly explains how the Soviet farmer, after destroying his house, should battle so bravely for the empty government-owned fields.

The commentator, moreover, knows very little about the Soviet Union's property laws. The house the peasant destroys is really his own. He built it, he paid for it, and his ownership and right to leave it to his family are guaranteed by the Soviet Constitution, which protects as "personal property" all goods of consumption, including small houses, and all personally used tools. The peasant destroys his house, which he built with much labor, in order to protect a property that is much more valuable to him – his share in the publicly owned wealth.*

The first mighty stimulus to the Soviet people's courageous fighting is the public ownership of all the vast resources of one-sixth of the world. The Soviet people are defending their property, and it is by far the most valuable chunk of property under one ownership anywhere in the world. The natural re-

* Constitution of the U.S.S.R. adopted December 5, 1936. "Article 6: The land, its deposits, waters, forests, mills, factories, mines, railway, water and air transport, banks, means of communication, large state-organized farm enterprises (state farms, machine-tractor stations, etc.) and also the basic housing facilities in cities and industrial localities are state property, that is, the wealth of the whole people."

"Article 10: The right of personal property of citizens in their income from work and in their savings, in their dwelling house and auxiliary husbandry, in household articles and utensils and in articles for personal use and comfort, as well as the right of inheritance of personal property of citizens, is protected by law."

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sources, the mines, power plants, factories of the whole U.S.S.R. are the joint property around which the joint owners rally as one united fist.

Joint ownership of the nation's resources is no romantic slogan. In very concrete ways each Soviet citizen knows that he shares the national wealth. That peasant putting his torch to his cottage knows that his home is covered by State fire insurance and that, if he burns it down in obedience to a national policy, the rebuilding of his home will be a first charge on the whole national resources at the end of the war. Those collective farmers who destroy their precious machinery – for which perhaps they paid by going half-fed and half-clad for years – know very well that – as soon as they win the war – the Soviet farm-implement plants will all work overtime to send the very newest machinery to their farms. This is a very simple and practical reason why hardheaded peasants will first destroy their own villages and then fight like demons to drive the German armies out of all the Soviet fields.

Division of property leads to division of interest. Since the dawn of history this division has injured morale in every war. Never, probably, has there been a fully united nation. The American War of Independence and the Civil War were notorious for disloyalties of Tories and Copperheads caused by divergent property rights. The present World War shows far more spectacular examples, the most striking of which is the betrayal of France by her men of property and their supporters. But even in Britain the fact that the government leased the privately owned railways at a sum which gave the stockholders greater dividends than in time of peace, that land for air-raid shelters had to be secured from private owners, that tenants on long-term leases continued to pay rent on houses that had been destroyed by bombs – all these things are sources of frictions and difficult adjustments that are bad for national morale. Even though such questions are eventually regulated in a sound country under the war pressure, the sacrifices of different classes remain unequal; the men who own the properties are not identical with the men who are called to fight for their protection.

A country that can blow up a Dnieper Dam, one of the

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world's great properties, by a single order and without a qualm from any private property owner has a source of national morale, and even of military efficiency, denied to nations that leave factories and even bridges intact because of local interests. The suspicion in Britain – even if no more than suspicion – that the Royal Air Force refrained from molesting Rumanian oil fields from Greece because the fields belonged to British owners injures national morale at its foundations.

Aside from morale, public ownership of the basic large properties unquestionably makes possible a more efficient handling of the country's resources in an all-out war. When war began in London, the air-raid wardens had first to be appointed and then get acquainted with their districts and begin to iron out the countless problems of mutual adjustment. In Moscow all the large buildings in the center of the city – though not all small houses in the suburbs – belong to the municipality. Every big apartment house has long had its House Committee, elected by the inhabitants and directly responsible to the city. These committees years ago listed the capacities and interests of every inhabitant in order to furnish them with playground facilities, classes for housemaids, and possibly a common laundry or reading room. When war begins, the whole organization for civil defense is already there in the House Committees, which almost automatically appoint night watchers, young men to guard the roofs from incendiary bombs, and gangs of able-bodied inhabitants to dig shelters in the courtyard or to fortify the basement according to whatever plan the city engineers approve.

It took many years for the sense of joint ownership of the public properties to come to the full development that exists today. The earlier attitude towards public property was sometimes, as it too often is in America and Britain, that what belongs to the public may be wasted, since it doesn't belong to *me*. (I imagine, however, that our Tennessee Valley "peasants" would fight fully as hard to defend the publicly owned dams of the Tennessee Valley Authority as they would for their own small homes.) Efforts both of Soviet educators and of Soviet criminal courts during that early period were devoted to creating a sense of responsibility toward the public wealth. Some of

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the penalties imposed rather startled the world. A man who committed a "private" murder might get only a few years' jail sentence, while a high official who grafted seriously on the public wealth or wrecked public properties might be sentenced to death. In the Soviet view the latter offense was really more serious to the interests of society.

As a new generation grew up under Soviet conditions the sense of joint ownership of vast resources began to infect them with a tremendous sense of power. It was often extravagantly expressed. "We, young owners of our country, called upon to conquer space and time," said Anna Mlynek, valedictorian some years ago of her class in a Moscow school. "I can fly to the moon, go to the Arctic, make a new discovery," exulted the writer Avdeyenko, "for my creative energy is not trod on by anyone." Some latitude of romantic expression must be allowed to writers and valedictorians, but their comments hardly took this form in other lands of Europe during those years.

This enthusiasm indicates the second great source of the Soviet fighting morale. It is that they are fighting for "their freedom." Not a formal, negative freedom, based upon absence of interference, but a dynamic and collectively reinforced freedom, based upon equal access to all the great resources of their land. It is almost pathetic today to note how often the Soviet press repeats the words "all freedom-loving peoples." They are trying, across the barriers of long misrepresentation, of which they are very conscious, to assure the people of the western democracies that the Soviet people are "freedom-loving" too.

The most dangerous propaganda lie of our decade has been the constant and deliberate coupling of the U.S.S.R. with the Nazis under the word "Communazi," or even the word "totalitarian," a phrase which most Soviet people have never heard. It has been repeated so often that possibly most Americans think that the Soviet people, or at least their theoreticians, consciously denounce democracy as the Nazis do. On the contrary, they have always consciously claimed it; Lenin's phrase was: "Soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic." Their criticism of America and Britain has never been the Nazi sneer at "effete democracy"; the Soviet people have criticized us for not being

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democratic enough, since we cannot control through our government, as they do, the productive mechanism which dominates our lives.

This Soviet claim to democracy – whatever our view of its validity – is important to us today for at least two reasons. If the Soviet people think that they are democratic, they will continue to fight against Hitlerism. Moreover, in winning the war, it is highly important to know whether the Soviet system has kept alive the individual initiative of its citizens, combined with a capacity for joint nationwide action, which is the ultimate fighting test of democracy. To misunderstand the Soviet people on this point may have been merely ignorance in peacetime; it amounts almost to treason in the present war.

No one doubts that the Soviet people suffered and gave their lives for many years for what they called freedom – freedom from the tsar, from capitalists, from foreign overlords. The constitution they adopted in 1936 has been described not only by themselves, but by eminent foreign democrats as the most democratic in the world. The veteran author, Romain Rolland, hailed it from Lake Geneva: “This is giving life to the great slogans which till now were but dreams of mankind – liberty, equality, fraternity.” The British writer, Sir Norman Angell, said that it might be the fate of Russia “actually to save political democracy for mankind.” There were many other such comments.

However much Soviet elections may violate our Anglo-Saxon ideas, no one denies that Soviet citizens turn out to them with a good deal of fuss and flurry and with the idea that they are really getting something done. Nor can anyone who talks to the people during the elections seriously believe that they come to vote because they are afraid to stay away. They pester their deputies with fully as many letters and demands for attention as Americans or Britons do. In fact, they use the elections to give rather more specific instructions to government than we do. Through the “Nakaz” or “instruction,” which is part of the election technique, anybody who likes may demand more schools, more hospitals, more streetcar lines, or any public policy he desires. When, for instance, the Soviet people showed in the election a widespread demand for more

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sound films than the existing Soviet industry could produce in fifteen years, the State Planning Commission at once took cognizance of this fact and enlarged the film-producing industry.

One tale from a village election that I attended will show the relationship between the people and the ruling party far better than any theoretical discussion. A small group of peasants, entitled to one deputy in the village government, rejected the candidate proposed by the local Party organization and nominated a different one in open meeting. They explained that the Party candidate was a decent enough fellow but seemed too busy with his Party work to attend to all the villagers' requests. They thought that the energetic girl whom they nominated, who was not a Communist, would give them more time. The new candidate was unanimously elected, all the Communists present, including the rejected candidate, immediately voting for her.

I told the incident to Andrei Zhdanov, Leningrad party chief and one of Stalin's closest friends. I added that it would be hard to explain to Americans an election in which the local Party leaders congratulated the people on throwing out the Party candidate. He hardly got my point, but said, "What we build cannot be built by passive people."

Soviet citizens prize the right to instruct their government about their desires, to criticize its performance, to recall its officials. On some occasions, they have exercised these rights to excess. The people of the Crimea, some years ago, recalled such a large percentage of their local officials in one year – I think it was about half of them – that it created a scandal in the Soviet press. Inhabitants of other republics said that the Crimeans were either very changeable or didn't know how to pick good people.

In general, however, the Soviet citizen is far more interested in directly taking part in government than in criticizing the part that others take. It is assumed to be a citizen's privilege and duty to become a volunteer in government activities by serving on housing commissions, taxing commissions, investigating commissions, according to what interests him most. His test of freedom is dynamic. He demands not so much the right to talk and complain as the right to act. A person who complained about

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anything in the government without taking the appropriate steps to remedy it would be considered irresponsible.

Can you become anything you like: a doctor, an engineer, an explorer? Can you gain access to the public resources and use your productive skill to its utmost, securing additional education to perfect your skill? Can you criticize your boss and have him removed if he is incompetent or overbearing? Can you advance in your chosen line as rapidly and as far as the resources of the whole country and your capacity and that of your fellows to organize them permit? Can you widen your life by any kind of cultural activity you choose – music, painting, drama – and secure instruction in these? Can you take part in any branch of government that interests you and for which you show some capacity?

Such are the Soviet citizen's tests of freedom. They are dynamic tests. They have produced the type of initiative that we are seeing in the present war.

The brutal and gripping account of the women "pitchfork guerrillas" is a case in point. When the Germans came to a certain village, they found only women, children, and the aged farm president. They killed the president and the girl bookkeeper, believing that by destroying the leaders they could dominate the rest. Immediately, one of the older women, a member of the collective farm administration, called a secret meeting in the woods, where the women elected a widow named Mironova as the new farm chairman and decided on a certain attitude toward German demands.

A few days later, a German officer began to molest a fifteen-year-old girl. Her mother defended her and struck the officer in the breast with a chunk of wood. The mother was arrested, tied to a post in the middle of a street for two days as an example, and finally hanged. That night the women met and decided on a course of action. They secretly removed the children to the woods and sent them on ahead under the care of the older women. The more able-bodied, eighteen in number, remained in the village all the next day and screened the departure of the others. On the following night they fell with pitchforks and axes upon the headquarters of the Nazi subdivision located in their village, caught the sentries by surprise,

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killed them and also the officer who was inside, and then abandoned the village after setting it on fire. Hiding by day in the forest, and traveling at night, the women moved east, living on berries and raw mushrooms as they went. Once a German motorcyclist detained them and ordered them to follow him; they killed him as they passed through a ravine. Another time they captured a German truck that had halted to make repairs and killed the three soldiers in it. After eleven days' march, they reached the Red Army.

This was an action not only of a brave people but of a people schooled in democracy, who know how to choose leaders and then to obey them, to combine initiative with discipline under life-and-death conditions. The fact that when leaders are killed the people know how to produce new leaders without delay is the practical answer to the question of "Soviet democracy," an answer hammered out on the blazing forge of war.

The third great source of Soviet morale lies in the fact that they are fighting for human dignity, for the equality of all races, against the Nazi concept of the superior race. Soviet citizens are tremendously proud of the fact that all their 182 nationalities of different color and culture are equal citizens and equal owners of the public wealth. Stalin himself, in conscious defiance of the Nazi doctrine, gave what is perhaps the most sweeping definition of political equality ever given: "Neither language, nor color of skin, nor cultural backwardness, nor the stage of political development can justify national and race inequality."*

The country that fell to the Soviet power to organize more than twenty years ago was seething with national hates, incited and nourished by the oppression of centuries. Like all imperialisms, tsarist imperialism not only oppressed directly but also set one nation against another. Turks massacred Armenians, Armenians massacred Turks; Ukrainian peasants, stirred up by Russian gendarmes, murdered Jews. The Soviet Government faced in all intensity that "national problem" which made Austria and the Balkans for generations the tinder box of Europe

* Report on the Constitution.

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and has added bitterness to the great conflicts of the modern world.

The Soviet leaders not only established equality through the Constitution; they created modern industries in the most backward parts of the country in order to give all the various nations an equal chance to develop. Larger proportionate sums for education and health were sent to the most backward regions in order to equalize them with the rest. Every national group was encouraged to develop its historic culture. Even the hangover of national prejudice that remained from the past was attacked, partly by education and partly by law. The Soviet Union is the only country in the world in which it is a crime for any person to give or receive any "direct or indirect privileges... on account of race or nationality" and where any preaching "race or national exceptionalism or hatred or contempt" is punishable by law. This was a "fighting point" enshrined in the Soviet Constitution, which was adopted after the rise of Hitler Germany across the border.

Acts of race prejudice are severely dealt with in the Soviet Union. Ordinary drunken brawls between Russians may be lightly handled as misdemeanors, but let a brawl occur between a Russian and a Jew in which national names are used in a way insulting to national dignity, and this becomes a serious political offense. Usually, the remnants of national antagonisms require no such drastic methods; they yield to education. But the American workers who helped build the Stalin-grad Tractor Plant will long remember the clash that Lewis and Brown had with the Soviet courts after their fight with the Negro Robinson, in the course of which they called him "damn low-down nigger." The two white men were "deported" to America, disgraced in Soviet eyes by a serious political offense; the Negro remained and is now a member of the Moscow City government.

The devotion of long-suppressed peoples and their willingness to die for their new equality is the prize that the Soviet national policy won for the present war. The Jews in the Soviet Union especially know that they have something to fight for as they see beyond the border Hitler's destruction of the Jews and the anti-Semitism that spreads from country to country. When

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I last visited Minsk, which under the tsar was a ghetto city, and under the Soviets was the capital of the Byelo-Russian republic, with more than one-third of the population Jews, I asked the young Intourist guide, "Don't you yourself, as a Jewish woman, ever encounter racial feeling in your daily contacts?"

"I haven't for years," she answered. I wonder what she encountered when the Nazis entered Minsk.

Every Soviet citizen knows that he is also fighting not only for Soviet property, freedom and race equality, but for the future of mankind throughout the world. Soviet school children are taught from the early grades that something which they call "fascism" is the ultimate enslavement of human life. Whatever the defects of their own country, the abuses of their government, the cruelties of their land, they believe that they can change these with time, education, and popular pressure. They know they cannot change Hitler except by war.

One of the most eloquent statements of the cause for which the Soviet people fight comes from the Soviet-Jewish writer, Ilya Ehrenberg:

Our Red Army men know what they are defending. They are defending the youngest country in the world, the land of youth. We are the first in the world to construct a society based not on greed, but on the cult of labor, on creative activity, on human solidarity.

We defend the land of real culture against barbarism. Dr. Goebbels once said: "The printed word nauseates me." Our reply was to publish Goethe's works in 700,000 copies in eight languages.

I saw German fascists humiliating Frenchmen in Paris. In Warsaw they destroyed the monument of the great Polish poet Mickiewicz; in our country his poems are published in hundreds of thousands of copies. In our country Kirghiz actors come to Moscow... It would never occur even to a hooligan in our country to offend anyone because of his nationality....

Our youth is fighting for our land, for our liberty. They are fighting also for the liberty of the world. They are fighting for human dignity. They are fighting for

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the rights of Paris, desecrated by the executioners, for the University of Prague, for proud Norway, for the huts of the Serbs, for the Acropolis.

By a bit of irony, the first Red Army men to be praised by their German enemies for “fanatical courage” in the very first days of the war were Kalmucks, those yellow-skinned former nomads of Astrakan. The Russians missed the irony; to them all races are equal. But the Nazi “superior race” praising Kalmucks! What a piercing jest!

Do you know Kalmucks? They were not a warrior race of Asia; they were shepherders pushed about by everybody for a thousand years. The Mongols, Tartars, and conquering cohorts of Mohammed pushed them westward; the Russians pushed them east. So the Kalmucks crawled at last to lands that nobody wanted, arid lands near the Volga delta, a sort of no man’s land between Europe and Asia. There they stayed, despised and spat upon.

It took ten years for even the October Revolution to make much of a dent in their primitive tribal ways. I first met Kalmucks in the days of collectivization, the winter of 1930. The old man of the tribe, the patriarch who told all the girls when and whom to marry and all the young men where and at what to work, was saying, “The Big Government advocates collectives. It’s a good idea. I herewith start one and order you all to join and work under my direction so that I can get tractors from Moscow.” The younger Kalmucks yelled, “Nothing doing! We’re going to run the collective ourselves and squeeze the old dictator out.” These hotheaded boys were listing everybody’s cows and chickens and dishes and declaring them all “common property.” It was a frightful mess.

Across it all there came that message of Stalin: “Collective farms are voluntary... nobody may be forced to join.... In any case, only the large-scale farm production should be collectivized, and not the family cow and chickens.”

Kalmucks rode for days to the nearest town and paid a hundred times the normal price for a newspaper bearing those words. It was their charter of freedom. The first time in centuries any government leader told a Kalmuck he didn’t have to

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take the government's advice. They had rights, free choice, initiative! They were invited, but not compelled, to co-operate with Moscow and get tractors. They, Kalmucks!

I have seen them since. Untrained herdsmen becoming managers of farms, heads of government. And I know that the qualities they have developed in the last twenty years of growth and struggle will eventually beat the Nazis in the long war of endurance that lies ahead. For the Soviet people – who were Kalmucks, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Russians, but who now are “Soviet people” – are no longer “backward people,” as they humbly admitted for many years. They are more experienced human beings than the attacking members of the “superior race.”

Those Kalmuck lads who die fanatically fighting have seen more, both of life and of victory, than the Nazi legions who trampled Europe under their iron heel. For they have known not one life, but a dozen; not one century, but five. In a brief twenty years, they have been tribal herdsmen, settled farmers, skilled mechanics and now – machine-gunners for the world's future at Armageddon. Certainly they would die rather than let the whole world turn backward – when they have already conquered five centuries.

Three :

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Years ago, when I first lunched with President Roosevelt just after he had seen H. G. Wells, I found that of all the subjects in the Soviet Union the one that interested him the most was the personality of Stalin and especially the technique of "Stalin's rule." It is a natural interest; I think it interests most Americans. The unbroken rise of Stalin's prestige for twenty years both within the Soviet Union and beyond its borders is really worth attention by students of politics.

Yet most of the American press brags of its ignorance of Stalin by frequently alluding to the "enigmatic ruler in the Kremlin." Cartoons and innuendo have been used to create the legend of a crafty, bloodthirsty dictator who even strives to involve the world in war and chaos so that something called "Bolshevism" may gain. This preposterous legend will shortly die. It was based on the fact that most American editors couldn't really afford to understand the Soviet Union, and that Stalin himself was usually inaccessible to foreign journalists. Men who had hit the high spots around the world and chatted cozily with Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Franklin D. Roosevelt and even Chiang Kai-shek were irritated when Josef Stalin wouldn't give them time. The fact of the matter was that Stalin was busy with a job to which foreign contacts and publicity did not contribute. His job, like that of a Democratic National Chairman, was organizing the ruling party and through it the country.

Since the German-Soviet war began, Stalin has become chief of the army and government. He will see more foreigners now. He made a good beginning with Harry Hopkins and W. Averell Harriman. They seem to have been impressed! I know how they were impressed for I also met Stalin. In the light of the impressions that leading Americans and Britons are now going to have of him, the legend of the inscrutable dictator will die. We may even come to hear Stalin spoken of, as a Soviet writer once described him, as "the world's great democrat"!

When I met Stalin, I did not find him enigmatic. I found

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him the easiest person to talk to I ever met. He is far and away the best committee chairman of my experience. He can bring everybody's views out and combine them in the minimum of time. His method of running committees reminded me somewhat of Jane Addams of Hull House or Lillian D. Wald of Henry Street Settlement. They had the same kind of democratically efficient technique, but they used more high pressure than Stalin did.

If Stalin has been inaccessible to foreigners – there were exceptions even to this – that does not mean that he lived in isolation, in a sort of Kremlin ivory tower. There were close to 200,000,000 people keeping him busy. He was seeing a lot of them. Not always necessarily the party leaders. A milkmaid who had broken the milking record, a scientist who had broken the atom, an aviator who flew to America, a coal miner who invented a new labor process, a workman with a housing difficulty, an engineer balked by new conditions – any person representing either a signal achievement or a typical problem might be invited by Stalin to talk it over. That was the way he got his data and kept in touch with the movement of the country.

That, I realized afterwards, was why Stalin saw me. For nearly ten years I had liked his country and tried to succeed there, for nearly two I had organized and tried to edit a little weekly newspaper for other Americans who had come to work for the Five Year Plan. And what with censorship, red tape, and what seemed the wanton emergence of another competing weekly, I wanted to give up. My editor-in-chief was practically blackmailing me that, if I resigned, he would ruin my reputation. Exhausted and angry, I was feeling trapped. A Russian friend suggested that I complain to Stalin. I did. Three days later his office called me up and suggested that I come down and talk it over with “some responsible comrades.” It was done so casually that I almost refused, for the editor-in-chief had finally agreed to my resignation and I was “through with it all.” But I felt that after sending that letter it was only polite to go.

I expected to see some fairly high official at the party headquarters, and was rather stunned when the auto drove straight to the Kremlin and especially when I entered a large conference room and saw not only Stalin rising to greet me,

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but Kaganovich and Voroshilov too! It seemed overwhelmingly disproportionate. Later I realized that it was not my little problem that chiefly concerned them. I was one of several thousand Americans who had begun to worry them. We had come to the Soviet Union to work in its industries. We were reasonably honest and efficient, but we couldn't make good. Stalin wanted to know what was the matter with us in our adjustment to Soviet industry. By investigating my troubles he would learn what made us Americans click, or more often not click, in the Soviet land. But if he learned about Americans from me, I learned from him something equally important – how the Soviet Union is put together and how Stalin works.

My first impression of him was vaguely disappointing. A stocky figure in a simple suit of khaki color, direct, unassuming, whose first concern was to know whether I understood Russian sufficiently to take part in discussion. Not very imposing for so great a man, I thought. Then we sat down rather casually, and Stalin was not even at the head of the table; Voroshilov was. Stalin took a place where he could see all our faces and started the talk by a pointed question to the man against whom I had complained. After that Stalin seemed to become a sort of background, against which other people's comments went on. The brilliant wit of Kaganovich, the cheerful chuckle of Voroshilov, the characteristics of the lesser people called to consult, all suddenly stood out. I began to understand them all and like them; I even began to understand the editor against whom I had complained. Suddenly I myself was talking and getting my facts out faster and more clearly than I ever did in my life. People seemed to agree with me. Everything got to the point very fast and smoothly, with Stalin saying less than anyone.

Afterward in thinking it over I realized how Stalin's genius for listening helped each of us express ourselves and understand the others. I recalled his trick of repeating a word of mine either with questioning intonation or a slight emphasis, which suddenly made me feel I had either not quite seen the point or perhaps had overstated it, and so drove me to make it plainer. I recalled how he had done this to others also. Then I understood that his listening has been a dynamic force.

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This listening habit dates back to the early days of his revolutionary career. "I remember him very well from the early days of our Party," said a veteran Bolshevik to me. "A quiet youth who sat at the edge of the committee, saying almost nothing, but listening very much. Toward the end he would make a few comments, sometimes merely as questions. Gradually we came to see that he always summed up best our joint thinking." The description will be recognized by anyone who ever met Stalin. In any group he is usually last to express his opinion. He does not want to block the full expression of others, as he might easily do by speaking first. Besides this, he is always learning by listening.

"He listens even to the way the grass grows," said a Soviet citizen to me.

On the data thus gathered, Stalin forms conclusions, not "alone in the night," which Emil Ludwig said was Mussolini's way, but in conference and discussion. Even in interviews, he seldom receives the interviewer alone; Molotov, Voroshilov, or Kaganovich are likely to be about. Probably he does not even grant an interview without discussing it first with his closest comrades. This is a habit he formed very early. In the days of the underground revolutionary movement, he grew accustomed to close teamwork with comrades who held each other's lives in their hands. In order to survive, they must learn to agree quickly and unanimously, to feel each other's instincts, to guess even at a distance each other's brains. It was in such a group that he gained his Party name – it is not the one that he was born with – "the Steel One, Stalin."

If I should explain Stalin to politicians, I should call him a superlatively good committeeman. Is this too prosaic a term for the leader of 200,000,000 people? I might call him instead a farseeing statesman; this also is true. But more important than Stalin's genius is the fact that it is expressed through good committee work. His talent for co-operative action is more significant for the world than the fact that he is great.

Soviet people have a way of putting it which sounds rather odd to Americans. "Stalin does not think individually," they say. It is the exact opposite of the "rugged individualist" ideal. But they mean it as the very highest compliment. They mean

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that Stalin thinks not only with his own brain but in consultation with the brains of the Academy of Science, the chiefs of industry, the Congress of Trade Unions, the Party leaders. Scientists use this way of thinking; so do good trade unionists. They do not "think individually"; they do not rely on the conclusions of a single brain. It is a highly useful characteristic, for no single human brain today is big enough to decide the world's complex problems. Only the combination of many brains thinking together, not in conflict but in co-operation, can safely handle the problems of today.

Stalin himself has said this a score of times to various interviewers. When Emil Ludwig and, later, Roy Howard sought to learn "how the great dictator made up his mind," Stalin told them: "Single persons cannot decide. Experience has shown us that individual decisions, uncorrected by others, contain a large percentage of error."

Soviet people never speak of "Stalin's will" or "Stalin's orders"; they speak of "government orders" and "the Party line," which are decisions produced collectively. But they speak very much of "Stalin's method" as a method that everyone should learn. It is the method of getting swift decisions out of the brains of many people, the method of good committee work. It is studied carefully in the Soviet Union by bright young men who go in for politics.

For me, the method was emphasized again in the days that immediately followed that first conference. It had seemed to me that Stalin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, and everybody else had agreed on a certain action. Then the days went by and nothing happened, till the conference seemed almost a dream. I confided my worry to a Russian acquaintance. He laughed.

"That is our 'terrible democracy'," he told me. "Of course, your affair is really settled, but technically it must be approved by all the members of the Political Bureau, some of whom are in the Caucasus and some in Leningrad. It will go as routine with a lot of other decisions and none of them will bother about your question because they know nothing about it. But this is our usual safeguard for anyone of the members may wish to add or change something in some decision. That decision will then go back to committee till all are satisfied."

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Stalin brings certain important qualities to these joint decisions. People who meet him are first of all impressed by his directness and simplicity, his swift approach. Next they notice his clearness and objectivity in handling questions. He completely lacks Hitler's emotional hysteria and Mussolini's cocky self-assertion; he does not thrust himself into the picture. Gradually one becomes aware of his keen analysis, his colossal knowledge, his grip of world politics, his willingness to face facts, and especially his long view, which fits the problem into history, judging not only its immediate factors, but its past and future too.

Stalin's rise to power came rather slowly. The rise of his type is slow and sure. It began far back with his study of human history and especially the history of revolutions. President Roosevelt commented to me with surprise on Stalin's knowledge of the Cromwellian Revolution in Britain as shown in his talk with H. G. Wells. But Stalin quite naturally studied both the British and the American historical revolutions far more intimately than British and American politicians do. Tsarist Russia was due for a revolution. Stalin intended to be in it and help give it form. He made himself a thorough scientist on the process of history from the Marxian viewpoint: how the masses of people live, how their industrial technique and social forms develop, how social classes arise and struggle, how they succeed. Stalin analyzed and compared all past revolutions. He wrote many books about them. But he is not only a scientist; he also acts.

In the early days of the Revolution, Stalin's name was hardly known outside the Party. In 1923, during Lenin's last illness, I was told by men whose judgment I trusted that Stalin was "our coming man." They based this on his keen knowledge of political forces and his close attention to political organization as secretary of the Communist Party. They also based it on his accurate timing of swift action and said that thus far in the Revolution he had not once guessed wrong. They said that he was the man to whom "responsible Party men" turned for the clearest statement of what they all thought. In those days Trotsky sneered at Stalin as the "most average man" in the Party. In a sense it was true. Stalin keeps close to the "average man"; the

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“average man” is the material of politics. But Stalin does it with a genius that is very far from average.

“The art of leadership,” said Stalin once, “is a serious matter. One must not lag behind the movement, because to do so is to become isolated from the masses. But one must not rush ahead, for this is to lose contact with the masses.” He was telling his comrades how to become leaders; he was also expressing his own ideal, which he has very effectively practiced.

Twenty years ago in the Russian civil war, Stalin’s instinct for the feeling of the common people more than once helped the Soviet armies to victory. The best known of these moments was the dispute between Stalin and Trotsky about an advance through the North Caucasus. Trotsky wanted to take the shortest military route. Stalin pointed out that this shortcut lay across the unfriendly lands of the Cossacks and would in the end prove longer and bloodier. He chose a somewhat roundabout way through working-class cities and friendly farming regions, where the common people rose to help the Red Armies instead of opposing them. The contrast was typical; it has been illustrated since then by twenty years of history. Stalin is completely at home in the handling of social forces, as is shown by his call today for a “people’s war” in the rear of the German Armies. He knows how to arouse the terrible force of an angry people, how to organize it and release it to gain the people’s desires.

The outside world began to hear of Stalin in the discussions that preceded the first Five Year Plan. (I wrote an article some five years earlier, predicting his rise as Lenin’s successor, but the article went unnoticed; it was several years too soon.) Russian workers outside the Communist Party began to think of Stalin as their leader during the first spectacular expansion of Soviet industry. He first became a leader among the peasants in March, 1930, through his famous article, “Dizziness from Success,” in which he checked the abuses that were taking place in farm collectivization. I have described its effect on the rural districts in the preceding chapter. I remember Walter Duranty waving that article at me and saying, “At last there is a leader in this land!”

Stalin’s great moment when he first appeared as leader of

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the whole Soviet people was when, as Chairman of the Constitutional Commission, he presented the new Constitution of the Socialist State. A commission of thirty-one of the country's ablest historians, economists, and political scientists had been instructed to create "the world's most democratic constitution" with the most accurate machinery yet devised for obtaining "the will of the people." They spent a year and a half in detailed study of every past constitution in the world, not only of governments but of trade unions and voluntary societies. The draft that they prepared was then discussed by the Soviet people for several months in more than half a million meetings attended by 36,500,000 people. The number of suggested amendments that reached the Constitutional Commission from the popular discussions was 154,000. Stalin himself is known to have read tens of thousands of the people's letters.

Two thousand people sat in the great white hall of the Kremlin Palace when Stalin made his report to the Congress of Soviets. Below me, where I sat in the journalists' box, was the main floor filled with the Congress deputies; around me in the loges sat the foreign diplomatic corps; behind me, in a deep gallery, were citizen-visitors. Outside the hall tens of millions of people listened over the radio, from the southern cotton fields of Central Asia to the scientific stations on the Arctic coast. It was a high point of Soviet history. But Stalin's words were direct and simple and as informal as if he sat at a fireside talking with a few friends. He explained the significance of the Constitution, took up the suggested amendments, referred a large number of them to various lawmaking bodies and himself discussed the most important. He made it plain that everyone of those 154,000 suggestions had been classified somewhere and would influence something.

Among the dozen or more amendments which Stalin personally discussed, he approved of those that facilitated democratic expression and disapproved of those that limited democracy. Some people felt, for instance, that the different constituent republics should not be granted the right to secede from the Soviet Union; Stalin said that, while they probably would not want to secede, their right to do so should be constitutionally guaranteed as an assertion of democracy. A fairly large

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number of people wanted to refuse political rights to the priests lest they influence politics unduly. "The time has come to introduce universal suffrage without limitations," said Stalin, arguing that the Soviet people were now mature enough to know their own minds.

More important for us today than constitutional forms, or even the question of how they work, was one very significant note in Stalin's speech. He ended by a direct challenge to the growing Nazi threat in Europe. Speaking on November 25, 1936, before Hitlerism was seriously opposed by any European government, Stalin called the new Soviet Constitution "an indictment against Fascism, an indictment which says that Socialism and Democracy are invincible."

In the years since the Constitutional Congress, Stalin's own personality began to be more widely known. His picture and slogans became so prominent in the Soviet Union that foreigners found this "idolatry" forced and insincere. Most Soviet folk of my acquaintance really do feel tremendous devotion to Stalin as the man who has built their country and led it to success. I have even known people to make a temporary change of residence just before election day in order to have the chance to vote for Stalin directly in the district where he was running, instead of for the less exciting candidate from their own district.

No information about Stalin's home life is ever printed in Soviet newspapers. By Russian tradition, everybody, even a political leader, is entitled to the privacy of his personal life. A very delicate line divides private life from public work. When Stalin's wife died, the black-bordered death notices in the paper mentioned her by her own name, which was not Stalin's, listed her work and connection with various public organizations, and the fact that she was "the friend and comrade of Stalin." They did not mention that she was his wife. The fact that she worked with him and might influence his decisions as a comrade was a public matter; the fact that she was married to him was their own affair. Some time later, he was known to have married again, but the press never mentioned it.

Glimpses of Stalin's personal relations come chiefly through his contacts with picturesque figures who have helped make Soviet history. Valery Chkalov, the brilliant aviator who

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made the first flight across the North Pole from Moscow to America, told of an afternoon that he spent at Stalin's summer home from four o'clock till after midnight. Stalin sang many Volga songs, put on gramophone records for the younger people to dance, and generally behaved like a normal human being relaxing in the heart of his family. He said he had learned the songs in his Siberian exile when there wasn't much to do but sing.

The three women aviators who broke all world records for women by their spectacular flight from Moscow to the Far East were later entertained at an evening party at the Kremlin in their honor. One of them, Raskova, related afterwards how Stalin had joked with them about the prehistoric days of the matriarchate when women ruled human society. He said that in the early days of human development women had created agriculture as a basis for society and progress, while men "only hunted and went to war." After a reference to the long subsequent centuries of woman's slavery, Stalin added, "Now these three women come to avenge the heavy centuries of woman's suppression."

The best tale, I think, is that about Marie Demchenko, because it shows Stalin's idea of leaders and of how they are produced. Marie was a peasant woman who came to a farm congress in Moscow and made a personal pledge to Stalin, then sitting on the platform, that her brigade of women would produce twenty tons of beets per acre that year. It was a spectacular promise, since the average yield in the Ukraine was about five tons. Marie's challenge started a competition among the Ukrainian sugar beet growers; it was featured by the Soviet press. The whole country followed with considerable excitement Marie's fight against a pest of moths. The nation watched the local fire department bring twenty thousand pails of water to the field to beat the drought. They saw that gang of women weed the fields nine times and clear them eight times of insects. Marie finally got twenty-one tons per acre, while the best of her competitors got twenty-three.

That harvest was a national event. So Marie's whole gang went to Moscow to visit Stalin at the autumn celebration. The newspapers treated them like movie stars and featured their

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conversation. Stalin asked Marie what she most wanted as a reward for her own good record and for stirring up all the other sugar beet growers. Marie replied that she had wanted most of all to come to Moscow and see "the leaders."

"But now you yourselves are leaders," said Stalin to Marie.

"Well, yes," said Marie, "but we wanted to see you anyway." Her final request, which was granted, was to study in an agricultural university.

When the German war was launched against the Soviet Union, many foreigners were surprised that Stalin did not make a speech to arouse the people at once. Some of our more sensational papers assumed that Stalin had fled! Soviet people knew that Stalin trusted them to do their jobs and that he would sum the situation up for them as soon as it crystallized. He did it at dawn on July 3 in a radio talk. The words with which he began were very significant.

"Comrades! Citizens!" he said, as he has said often. Then he added, "Brothers and Sisters!" It was the first time Stalin ever used in public those close family words. To everyone who heard them, those words meant that the situation was very serious, that they must now face the ultimate test together and that they must all be closer and dearer to each other than they had ever been before. It meant that Stalin wanted to put a supporting arm across their shoulders, giving them strength for the task they had to do. This task was nothing less than to accept in their own bodies the shock of the most hellish assault of history, to withstand it, to break it, and by breaking it save the world. They knew they had to do it, and Stalin knew they would.

Stalin made perfectly plain that the danger was grave, that the German armies had taken most of the Baltic states, that the struggle would be very costly, and that the issues were between "freedom or slavery, life or death to the Soviet State." He told them: "The enemy is cruel and implacable. He is out to seize our lands, watered with our sweat... to convert our peoples into the slaves of German princes and barons." He called upon the "daring initiative and intelligence that are inherent in our people," which he himself for more than twenty years had helped to create. He outlined in some detail the bitter path

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they should follow, each in his own region, and said that they would find allies among the freedom-loving peoples of the world. Then he summoned them “forward – to victory.”

Erskine Caldwell, reporting that dawn from Moscow, said that tremendous crowds stood in the city squares listening to the loud speakers, “holding their breath in such profound silence that one could hear every inflection of Stalin’s voice.” Twice during the speech, even the sound of water being poured into a glass could be heard as Stalin stopped to drink. For several minutes after Stalin had finished the silence continued. Then a motherly-looking woman said, “He works so hard, I wonder when he finds time to sleep. I am worried about his health.”

That was the way that Stalin took the Soviet people into the test of war.

Four:

Building for Total Defense

“How do the Soviet people, who admittedly couldn’t run a tractor if you gave them one but just left it rusting in the field, suddenly appear with thousands of tanks efficiently handled?” was the question that a New York editor asked me at the beginning of the Soviet-German war.

The answer is found in a twenty-four year national policy and especially in the three Five Year Plans promoted by Stalin. The new Soviet State inherited in 1917 a country broken by the strain of the first World War. Tsarist Russia, with its enormous army, unsupported by any adequate economic base in the hinterland, was the first country to crack under the strain. “Peace, land, and bread,” was the cry of the country. Four successive cabinets failed to satisfy it and this brought the Bolsheviks to power.

The starving, war-exhausted land secured no peace. It was attacked by the armies of all the capitalist world. Moscow and Leningrad and the central part of Russia were separated by attacking armies from their chief food and fuel bases for two and a half years. The granary of the Ukraine, the coal of the Donetz, the oil of Baku, the mines of the Urals, the cotton of Turkestan were in enemy hands. At the height of the foreign intervention Soviet Russia was invaded by armies of fourteen countries. It may be worthwhile today to note how much this determined country can suffer and still survive.

When I first went to Moscow in the autumn of 1921, the countryside was full of thousands of peasant refugees fleeing on foot from the starving Volga Valley. In the Minsk station I saw a Red guard barefoot, dangling his rifle on a bit of rope. In Moscow no streetcars were running, no street lamps lit, and the water pressure did not rise above the second floor in my hotel. In once prosperous farming regions along the Volga, half-naked children huddled all winter long on top of the family ovens in villages starving without candles, dying in the dark.

Out of those bitter years the Soviet leaders came to the conclusion that, at whatever cost, they must make their coun-

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try economically independent and strong enough to defend itself against the world. "War is implacable," said Lenin. "It puts the question with merciless sharpness. Either perish or overtake the advanced countries and surpass them.... This is how history has put the question."*

Could a backward peasant land like Russia, with neither funds nor trained people, build up from its own resources great publicly owned industries? Could it overtake economically the older and more advanced nations and become independent and secure? This was the chief question whose discussion racked the country, and especially the ruling Communist Party, during those years. It was the famous discussion about "building Socialism in one country." Trotsky held that Russia could not do it, that, unless the surrounding capitalist powers were overthrown by revolution, they would inevitably overwhelm the young Socialist commonwealth. He therefore advocated that the Soviet State devote itself primarily to fomenting revolution, especially in Germany.

Stalin's view, which was increasingly held by the majority, was that the Soviet people could create a strong and independent state out of their own resources through publicly owned enterprises. Such a state might be regarded by the capitalist powers with hostility, but, if it handled its foreign relations astutely, and especially if it refrained from mixing in the internal affairs of other nations, it might secure a fairly long period of peace in which to strengthen itself for whatever the future might hold. He proposed, therefore, to put the main emphasis on the rapid building of modern heavy industry, the rapid modernization of farming, and the creation of an armed and nation-conscious people out of an illiterate population speaking more than a hundred languages. The difficulties were tremendous, but the goal was unprecedented. Therefore, the Soviet leaders plunged into that now-famous struggle known as the first Five Year Plan.

"We could not refrain," said Stalin, "from whipping up a country which was a hundred years behind and which, owing

* Quoted by Stalin in his *Report on Results of the First Five Year Plan*.

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to its backwardness, was faced with mortal danger.... We would have been unarmed in the midst of a capitalist environment which is armed with modern technique.”*

The world outside the Soviet borders was frankly scornful. Inside the country much of the peasantry and part of the upper engineering staff was opposed. American engineers who came to help build the new industries often said that the Five Year Plan was “utterly logical,” but added, “if the people will stand for the sacrifices.” These sacrifices were heavy. They included the breakage of large quantities of machinery by sabotage and inefficiency. More serious than that, they included chronic and sometimes acute shortages of every kind of consumers’ goods as well as of food.

To an unbelieving world Stalin announced in early 1933 that the former backward peasant Russia had become the world’s second industrial country. The number of workers employed in industry had doubled from eleven to twenty-two million; the volume of industrial output had also doubled. An iron and steel industry of large proportions had been created. Tractors, automobiles, harvester combines, and every variety of modern machine was being produced. They were being produced inefficiently and with tremendous wastage, which caused loud groans from all the American engineer consultants.

“We wasted and broke machines,” admitted Stalin. “But we gained what is more important – time!”

In the same brief period some twenty million tiny, uneconomic subsistence farms were combined into 200,000 large farms (by 1940 it was 240,000) based on machine power, division of labor and scientific methods. At first they were even less efficiently run than the industries for they operated under locally elected management, chosen by the farmers who had pooled their lands. For two years farming was dislocated, not, as often claimed, by Moscow’s enforcement of collectivization but by the fact that local people, eager to be first at the promised tractors, organized collective farms three times as fast as the plan called for, setting up large scale farming without machines and even without book-keepers. In 1932-33 the whole

* Ibid.

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land went hungry; all food everywhere was rigidly rationed. (It has been often called a famine which killed millions of people, but I visited the hungriest parts of the country and while I found wide-spread suffering, I did not find, either in individual villages or in the total Soviet census, evidence of the serious depopulation which famine implies.) The government met the emergency by drawing on the better trained personnel of industry and sent to the rural districts several thousand of the country's best organizers – factory managers, army officers, agricultural experts – to help organize the farms. The result was at once apparent in the good harvest of 1933. After this, farming rapidly and permanently improved.

Ominous signs appeared more than once beyond the Soviet borders threatening war before Soviet preparations could be complete. The Chinese army of Marshal Chang Tso-lin attacked the Eastern border in 1929; he was considered a catspaw for certain imperialist powers. When I went from Moscow to Riga in 1930, the year of the chief drive for farm collectivization, I found all the foreign diplomats watching to see the catastrophic collapse of Soviet farming which would give the border countries a chance to invade. Most ominous of all was Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931, followed by the steady march of her troops to the Soviet border. The Soviet leaders met what they considered an imminent danger of war by shifting the emphasis of the Five Year Plan toward building a main center of heavy industry in the Ural Mountains and the Kuznetsk Basin – the practically impregnable part of the country.

With the conclusion of the first Five Year Plan, the Soviet Union plunged into the second, which did three times as much new construction as the first Five Year Plan had done and did it with much less strain. Soviet industry was completely reorganized and equipped throughout with the latest machines and methods. Greater emphasis was given than previously to producing goods of consumption. This, together with the rapid improvement of farming, caused a fairly swift rise in the general standard of living.

Those were the years when the Soviet people grew lyrical over victories in production. Arriving foreigners spoke of the Russians' "romantic passion" for machines. Poems and dramas

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were devoted to the ever-rising curve of production, the opening of new industries and the successful mastery of new technical processes. Scores of new cities arose on formerly barren land. Thousands of geological expeditions penetrated the wilderness to discover and chart nationally owned wealth. The conquering march reached northward to settle the Arctic and eastward to the wild coast opposite Alaska. Guided by radio, airplane, and icebreaker, trading ships began to sail from the Atlantic to the Pacific through the polar seas.

In the latter half of 1935, Soviet workers began to storm the world frontiers of productivity. The Stakhanov movement arrived, named for a coal miner in the Donetz Basin who broke production records by devising a relatively simple division of labor. The same thing happened in other industries. The general level of efficiency was still far below that of Western Europe, but individual workers, amid the applause of their fellows, began to equal or even beat world records. Some coal miners in the Donbas doubled Ruhr production. Some forgemasters in the Gorki Auto Works broke standards set by Ford. Some shoemakers in Leningrad made records fifty per cent higher than the world record held by the Bata factories of Czechoslovakia.

The Soviet people glimpsed and felt victory. For the first time they began to feel that they were no longer "backward Russians." They were beginning to challenge the world. With this went a proud sense of their unity as a nation. Cotton growers in Turkestan exulted, "We have conquered the Arctic," though they themselves would never see the snow. Bearded peasants, who had never sat in an airplane, began to talk about "our conquest of the air." Young Nina Kameneva expressed the mood of the country's young people when she broke a world's altitude record in parachute jumping and remarked on landing: "The sky of our country is the highest sky in the world."

Some people even glimpsed Utopia. Stakhanovite workers told me: "Ten years hence we shall make easily all the goods we need. Farming and industry may cease to be our main problems. Art, science, exploration, and human development will become the chief interests. There are no limits to these." – Even while they said it, an event had occurred – the assassina-

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tion of Kirov* – which was to plunge the Soviet people from this mood of triumph into years of watchfulness and suspicion, the shadow of approaching war.

When the second World War broke at last across Europe, two Five Year Plans had changed the U.S.S.R. to a modern industrial nation, second only to the United States. Its industry lacked the smooth sureness of the older industrial countries, but its output was 17 per cent above that of Germany and more than ten times that of tsarist Russia. Production per capita was considerably below that of Western Europe, which means that the standard of living was low. But because of the size of the country, production in absolute figures was colossal. This is what counts in war.

A single farm implement works in Rostov, the Selmarsh, turns out more farm machinery than the whole of Germany produces. A single auto plant at Gorki on the Volga produces more auto trucks than all of Britain. Two steel towns in the Ural-Siberia district make thirty per cent more pig iron than all Japan. Two new oil refineries in Baku refine more oil than all the forty-two refineries of Rumania. More important even than size is the fact that eighty per cent of all production comes from new or thoroughly reconstructed modern plants. The chief handicap is that all of these enterprises are very new and the workers in them very inexperienced. But they are enthusiastic, energetic, and learning fast.

In farming, the situation was also reassuring. The harvest of 1937 was the largest the country had ever known. The harvests of the next few years, while somewhat smaller, were even more significant, since they were secured, not by grace of God and good weather, but in spite of considerable bad weather, including in many areas a record-breaking drought. Modern farm methods conquered the difficult conditions, indicating that Soviet farms were no longer subject to periodic famines, as tsarist farming had always been. The modern mechanized farms of the farm collectives have brought 338,390,000 acres under production, 79,040,000 more than were farmed in 1913. Ninety-one per cent of the Soviet farms are serviced by tractors

* See Chapter VII.

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and harvester combines, a far greater mechanization than prevails on American farms. Collectivization has created farms that in case of war can be made to produce effectively by women, old men, and boys. There is one very serious proviso – the farms need gasoline and spare parts. The Soviets have gambled their existence on the thesis that an industrial nation – with both modern industry and industrialized farming – has the advantage in modern war.

They have built their total defense: in armament, in industry, in farming, and in the development of the people. They built it barbarously: they wasted materials, they broke machines, they exhausted people. They built faster than could be built, for they built against time.

And now the time against which they built has come.

Five:

Beyond the Urals

In the first days of the Soviet-German war, when Ivan Maisky, Soviet Ambassador to London, was asked, "What would happen if Moscow should fall?" he answered: "Even in that case we will fight on, supplied from the factories and growing industries hidden behind the Urals. For years we have planned and built widely dispersed industries... vital to the war." The existence of this great economic base behind the Urals is one of the three reasons that Harry Hopkins is reported to have given for his belief that Hitler could not conquer Russia.

Geography is a military weapon, as the Japanese have found to their cost in China. The geography of Russia once beat Napoleon; it is one of the factors that will yet beat Hitler. "Social and economic forces change, but geography remains," said a Soviet diplomat several years ago to me. In the past fifteen years the vast geography of Russia has been consciously organized for the plan of total defense.

The sun that rises on the Pacific shores of the Soviet Union takes eleven hours to reach the battlefield on the western frontier. The reach of this mighty country is nearly halfway around the globe; it is by far the greatest single piece of territory under one flag anywhere in the world. It is comparable to the whole continent of North America, with Hitler striking at the states on the Atlantic seaboard. To seize Leningrad, Kiev, Moscow, and even the oil of the Caucasus would not end Hitler's difficulties if the rest of this vast area remained able and willing to fight him. It is important, therefore, to know how this great hinterland lives and moves and has its being. Is it mere dead expanse of territory or can it maintain a life of its own?

Many writers have assumed that the Soviet Government is so completely centralized that if Moscow were once penetrated, the land would fall to pieces. If the Soviet structure were imposed from above, this of course might happen. But the whole history of the Soviet land and its development shows

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that it is widely based on the initiative of the people.

I once met a woman in a Soviet health resort who boasted that the region where she lived in Siberia had had Soviet power "without a break and without even a battle" from the 1917 Revolution right down to the present day. I ventured to challenge her statement.

"Didn't Kolchak hold Siberia?" I asked.

"Kolchak held some points along the railroad," she answered, "but we were nearly 200 miles north of the railroad and he never got up that far." She added that the forms of Soviet power had been set up by the local peasants led by Bolshevik exiles who happened to be in that district when the Revolution came. They had kept in touch with Moscow by the Great Northern Telegraph Line, which passes through the region. Today, of course, they would have the radio. There were many other regions that were separated from Moscow for long periods during the war of intervention of 1918-20, yet retained the Soviet form of government, kept up communications, and carried on parallel actions.

One should not minimize Moscow's importance. Politically, economically, and strategically, it is the U.S.S.R.'s most important center. Not because it contains the government; this is relatively unimportant, for governments can move. Moscow produces 15 per cent of the U.S.S.R.'s total industrial output; it is the greatest industrial center. It is roughly comparable to Chicago, having about the same population - 4,137,018 in the 1939 census. Like Chicago it is the terminus of many railroads, which do not pass through the city but shoot out from it like the spokes of a wheel.

Moscow has always been a fairly strong strategic center; in the wars of intervention that overran most of the Soviet territory, Moscow was not reached. In recent years its strategic possibilities have been greatly developed. Its eleven diverging railways have been connected by a belt railway, a great ring in the city's outskirts; this makes it possible to shift troops and supplies in any direction, and gives great mobility to a defending force. Supplementing the railways is a new system of canals, which has changed Moscow from an inland city to a port accessible to five seas: the Baltic, White, Caspian, Azov, and Black

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Seas. Even if the enemy were on three sides of Moscow, the city could draw supplies from the fourth. The canals, very vulnerable to guerrillas, would be of much less use to an invader.

Supplementing the railways and canals is a new boulevard system, also consisting of diverging spokes connected by two wide concentric rings. They have been widened in recent years and are now from three to five times as wide as New York's Fifth Avenue. I was one of those Moscow dwellers who rather mourned the removal of trees from the center of the ring boulevards and the taking down of a lot of picturesque old churches at traffic junctions. It made the city look bare and seemed not entirely demanded by the existing traffic. But now it is clear that this has made Moscow perhaps the most tremendous fortress in the world. A million and a half people can converge on its central square and march through in a few hours; they do it twice each year on the big holidays. From three to six lines of motorized troops, including tanks, can be shot in any one of a dozen directions through the city without a traffic jam. They would even have protection in the long lines of massive concrete apartment houses built on both sides of these boulevards in the past few years. If the enemy tried to use the boulevards in a reverse direction the apartment houses would become concrete forts raining down grenades.

Moscow can make all the implements of war, including planes and motor trucks, inside the city. Her electric power no longer comes from long-haul coal, as during the wars of intervention; it is based on local deposits well behind the town, developed in the past fifteen years. Her water supply comes from a mighty river, which in recent years has been augmented by waters flowing from the north; it winds for miles in a protected zone within the outer fortifications, purifying itself as it goes. By a complete utilization of all the city garbage for both heating farm greenhouses and fertilizing great gardens, Moscow now gets its vegetables, including potatoes, from areas very near. Even wheat has been moved north by modern farming methods and seed selection, so that areas fairly close to Moscow can supply the city's needs. Moscow's sky is covered by an air defense that was the marvel of the London experts who visited it after the war began to make suggestions and found it far

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superior to London's. Anti-aircraft shells make a thick blanket at four distinct levels to London's one, and observation planes patrol the heavens night and day. Moscow's four million people also offer a night-and-day defense.

Moscow would thus be most difficult of all the Soviet cities for an enemy to conquer. It could put on the most epoch-making siege in history; the cost in men would probably break the German armies. If it should fall, it would be the heaviest single loss the Soviet forces could sustain. The war would pass at once to a different phase, to a last-ditch battle. But even if Moscow fell, the Red Army and the Soviet people could still fight on.

Ever since Lenin's day the Ural Mountains have been regarded as the last ditch of Soviet defense. Every Soviet child learns in his history lessons that Lenin was ready in 1919-20 to retreat to the Urals if this were the only shelter remaining for the hard-pressed Soviet power. Even then the Urals had some metallurgical industry based on its great mineral resources. This, together with the geography of the Urals, made it a suitable last-line defense. To reach the Urals an invader must first cross the Volga River, one of the world's great waterways, and then fight uphill through fields and forests for close to a thousand miles toward the mountains. It would be almost like fighting the way across the Mississippi and all the way to the Rockies to conquer an army drawing supplies from the mountain states and the Pacific Coast.

In the past fifteen years the areas beyond the Urals have been greatly developed as part of a nationwide plan. As early as 1918 Lenin stressed the need of a more rational distribution of Russian industry to meet the strain of any future war. In those days the discussion was largely theoretical; it was based on the knowledge that a barbarously irrational distribution of tsarist industry was one of the factors in Russia's collapse. Most of tsarist industry was located close to the German borders and was seized at once by the invader. In the rest of the country there was little correlation between the location of industry and raw materials. This added to the difficulties and unreliability of transport and caused industry to break down.

A first aim of the Soviet government was therefore not only

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rapid increase of industry but its rational distribution. Increasingly, great industrial plants were built close to their raw materials, thus lessening transport. Industry was developed throughout the country and a whole series of relatively self-sufficient regions was created, each having the materials and industries necessary to feed, clothe, shelter, and arm its population in case of war.

The greatest relative development of Soviet industry in the past fifteen years, especially of the war industries, has taken place behind the Urals. After Japan's invasion of Manchuria this development was especially speeded. This area is still far behind European Russia in total output; the three greatest centers of industry in the U.S.S.R. are still Moscow, Leningrad, and Eastern Ukraine. But whereas the western centers produced more than nine-tenths of the production of tsarist Russia, their relative weight is now less. The fuel and metal industries beyond the Urals now turn out between a quarter and a third of the country's total output. They produce far more than the whole of tsarist Russia produced in the first World War.

Behind the Urals one may distinguish at least five great regions: the Urals themselves, Siberia, Kazakstan, Central Asia, and the Far East. Each of them could carry on a fairly protracted war and feed and clothe itself while doing it. All the five regions are connected by railway lines which are independent of European Russia. Any one of these five regions is nearly the size of all of Western Europe. Taken together they are several times the size of Europe.

The mightiest of these regions consists of the Urals themselves taken together with Siberia, which adjoins on the east. These two together form a self-sufficient empire somewhat larger than all of Western Europe and with natural resources probably greater. It is protected from invasion by 2000 miles of European Russia to the west and by equal or greater distances to the south and east. It forms a tremendous base in the heart of the Soviet country from which streams of war supplies can be sent in any direction. It specializes in the production of war necessities, from tanks and munitions to canned meat, powdered milk, and wheat.

On the western edge of this region lies Magnitogorsk

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(Magnet Mountain) in the southern Urals. Its single mountain of iron is enough to supply all Soviet consumption for more than a generation. I visited the city in the days of its building and saw a raw industrial town arising through titanic struggle on the dry and naked steppe five hundred miles away from any other city. The town dealt in superlatives; every one of its accessory plants was the "biggest ever known." Today Magnitogorsk is the world's second largest iron and steel producer, being outranked only by Gary, when Gary is producing at peak. During American depressions, Magnet Mountain beats Gary.

A thousand miles east of Magnet Mountain lies the Kuznetsk Basin (Kuzbass for short), one of the world's greatest coal deposits. I visited it three times and saw its new steel city being dug by steam shovels out of the mud. It is nearly as large as Magnitogorsk and in some details beats it. The cities are cheerful rivals, competing in steel production, parks, and football. In the early days they exchanged coal and iron ore; cars shuttled back and forth on a 1200-mile line, taking coal one way and iron ore the other. With later rationalization this haul was found too long. Iron ore was located near Kuzbass and coal deposits were found nearer to Magnitogorsk for much of the two regions' needs.

Between Magnet Mountain and Kuznetsk lie the grain fields of Western Siberia, one of the world's most famous sources of wheat. Its production has been increased much faster than that of any other part of the U.S.S.R. through the ploughing of virgin lands. Throughout the whole of this vast region many great industrial cities have arisen, including some of the largest and most modern machinery plants in the world. Uralmash, making steel-mill machinery, claims to be the world's largest; so does the Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant where caterpillar tractors, and therefore tanks, are made. The largest railroad car works in the U.S.S.R. is at Tagilsk in the Urals. Three of the largest locomotive works are in three different cities in this great area. Nor are other industries neglected. All the necessities of life are produced here from food-processing, textile spinning and paper production to cement, chemicals, shoes and every kind of metal object.

The Ural-Siberian empire connects by rail with two great

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regions south of it: Kazakstan and Central Asia. The line is the famous Turk-Sib Railway, completed in 1930 and the first to open of all the great projects of the first Five Year Plan. It runs through deserts far behind the Urals, two thousand miles away from the western battlefront.

Twice in the past eleven years I have visited the Turk-Sib Railway. I went with threescore journalists from all the world by special train to the tremendous celebration that marked its opening, – the joining of the north and south sections of the line. Our train ran by no schedule. There was no schedule on the line, for this was its first train. Ahead of us on new-laid rails swayed our festival locomotive, painted green and flaming with inscriptions. “Strengthen the might of the U.S.S.R.! May Day 1930! Gift of Aulie-Ata workers to Turk-Sib.” It was a gift by volunteer workers, who had overhauled it in spare time without wages. In reward, a volunteer crew from the Aulie-Ata repair shops had the honor of taking the first Turk-Sib train.

All afternoon at the rail joining a Russian-Kazak festival went on. One of the chief stunts was to put a Russian and a Kazak together in a great iron bucket and swing them sixty feet in air by the crane that normally handled the bucket filled with sand. A great crowd screamed and thrilled. On the football field the teams of Siberia and Turkestan contended till dusk. I was caught and all but killed in one of the wild celebrations of Kazak horsemen who had journeyed weeks on horseback to see the “Great Iron Horse” traverse their desolate land. I was walking with a friend across a valley and looked up to see a thousand horsemen riding down upon us in a mad cavalry charge, swaying drunken with speed in their saddles, looking neither ahead nor right nor left. We saved our lives by facing the oncoming horses and with authoritative gestures commanding the animals, not their ecstatically oblivious riders, to diverge. They split and went by on both sides of us, sometimes only a few inches away. When it was over, I had a shock of terror from the reckless power of this untamed land.

Ten years later, in December 1940, I came back to Kazakstan on the Turk-Sib railway to take the new airplane route from Alma Ata to China. I was the first American to travel by this route. It took five days on a fast through train to go

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from Moscow to the capital of Kazakstan. On the second day out we traversed the Volga valley and saw wheat fields by the tens of thousands of acres, the largest grain farms in the world. Fields of fresh sprouts swept green to the horizon, followed by equal fields of black fallow land. On the second night, as the land grew steadily drier, we skirted the southern Urals and came to the old tsarist fortress town, Orenburg, gateway to Soviet Asia and Kazakstan.

Over the noisy crowds blared a noisier station radio, shouting out music and news. The bookstall offered thick tomes on *Road Building*, *Courses for Tractor Drivers*, *Technical Minimum for Railway Mechanics*, *Tales of the Arctic*, *The Young Naturalist*, *Changes in the Constitution of the Communist Party*, and *La Litterature Internationale*, a monthly journal in French. In the palm-decorated dining room, they served an uninteresting but nourishing meal of soup, meat, macaroni, and fruit compote. Orenburg Station boasted a barbershop, a drugstore, a first-aid room, and a mothers' and babies' rest room on the second floor. Gangs of women were loading powdered coal into cars and a man at the platform buffet was hewing loaves of bread in half with a big cleaver to insert inch-thick slabs of heavy meat in a sort of giant sandwich. After this impact of raw, virile life, we drew into empty country. Between long miles, we passed occasional villages drowned under seas of mud. Then the land grew emptier still, dotted with herds of sheep and cattle. Five days in all, and most of it vacant land.

Twice in these endless lands I woke at night to see flames of factories and hear the roaring of metal plants or oil refineries. Somewhere north of the Aral Sea, somewhere near Emba, a new oil city blazed in the dark. I recalled that Emba is probably the greatest oil deposit in the world, largely undeveloped, but the latest figures – given before the second World War put a censorship on figures – indicate that these oil regions south-east of the Urals now produce 21% of the Soviet Union's total. I only know that I saw the flaring lights of a fair-sized industrial city so new that it was listed neither in the railway timetable nor on the map.

In the last few hours of the journey a yellow-skinned Kazak youth of twenty-six got into my compartment. He was much

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excited to learn that I had seen the Turk-Sib railway at its beginning. He said, "I was a boy of thirteen when they started to build the railway, a starving shepherd boy who had never been to school. I came to beg for a job on the road and they put me in the railway school and fed and trained me. When the Turk-Sib opened, I was sixteen, fit for a semiskilled job. I kept on working and studying; the railway gives you every chance. Now, at twenty-six, I have a good job in the maintenance department. Turk-Sib is my father and my life."

In Alma Ata I met the Kazakhstan patriots. Not since boom days in California have I heard such cheerful local bragging as I heard from the local editors who called upon me at the airport. They presented me first of all with seven massive volumes, sumptuously bound. "Published last spring for the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Kazakhstan," they told me. Pictures of wheat fields and cotton fields and tractors and oil wells and copper refineries were bound together with stupendous statistics and salted down with plentiful lyrics by Kazak poets in praise of Stalin, the U.S.S.R., first love, spring-time, and Kazakhstan! These Kazakhstaners saw Moscow as "the center," where they met with other Republics to settle plans and budgets. But Kazakhstan itself was something too.

"I have been in Berlin and I have lived in London. Neither of them is as good a town as Alma Ata. We have the greenest town in the whole U.S.S.R." Such was the cheerful brag of Comrade Orestov, editor-in-chief of the *Kazakstan Pravda*. He almost made a virtue of the mud of the road in which his auto got stuck on the way to the airport; it proved the newness of the airport and the bigness of Kazakhstan. "We have so many roads to build," he told me. "This one will be well paved by spring.

"Kazakhstan has more than a million square miles," he continued. "It is bigger than the fourteen chief European countries taken together. We are the biggest Republic in the Union; we reach from the Ural Mountains to China, from the snows of the Siberian Altai to the blue Caspian Sea. We have everything: wheat, livestock, cotton, every kind of mineral. In copper we are first in the union; in coal, the third. Our Academy of Science is exploring our so-called desert areas. Already they have

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found 240,000,000 acres of tillable vacant land. Much of it, of course, needs irrigation. But the wastelands have resources of minerals. Our factories are developing. Our industrial production has already surpassed our farm products in value. We have thirteen times the industrial production that Kazakstan had in tsarist days."

Kazakstan, land of nomad horsemen, was already boasting of its industrialization! "Our young folks built five hundred miles of railway last summer," said Orestov, "to connect Magnitogorsk iron with Karaganda coal. This cuts in half the long haul of coal that they used to get from Kuznetsk. It was built by our Young Communist League, five hundred miles in one summer. We consider it quite a record here. We are building another now to the oil fields near Emba."

Alma Ata, the capital of this area, has grown from a town of 60,000 to a proud young city of 260,000 in the ten years since the railroad reached it. Its life has leaped at once from the nomad epoch to the airplane. The railroad is too slow to tame the wastes of Kazakstan. From Alma Ata Airport the planes shoot forth, east, west, south, north, on new discoveries. They survey the copper, coal, oil of a vast empire where herdsmen roamed ten years ago. After they find new riches, they build the roads to get them. The Alma Ata press featured especially the building of railroads and irrigation ditches and the industrial achievements of the Chimkent lead workers, the Kazakstan sugar workers, the Karaganda coal miners.

Kazakstan is only one of the energetic regions behind the Urals. South of it lie the lands of the Uzbeks and Tadjiks, where some of the largest textile mills of the U.S.S.R. work up the locally grown cotton and where automobile and airplane parts are produced by mass production in the historic city of Samarkand. North of Kazakstan is the far greater Ural-Siberia region that I have already described. Each of these three great regions could live and defend itself for a long period on its own resources. All of them taken together are a mighty supply base, two thousand miles north and south, which can send war supplies by any one of several channels to any part of the Soviet land.

Ten days east of Moscow by fast express lies Vladivostok. It

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is the longest rail journey in the world. It takes twice as long as the fast steamers once took from New York to Europe. Here, in the Soviet Far East, is another tremendous region so far away from European Russia that it seems almost like a different country. Here also are the same Soviet people. Because of the great distance from Moscow, they are defended by two special Far Eastern Red Armies with a completely separate organization of personnel and war supplies. For the past ten years the drive to develop the Far East has been promoted by Soviet press and organizations. It has attained proportions similar to that which once built the American Far West.

I have traveled many times on the Trans-Siberian. In the spring of 1935, I went from Vladivostok to Moscow with a stop-over in the Jewish autonomous territory whose capital is Birobidjan. The train was crowded with pioneering people in warm woolen clothes and padded leather jackets, engineers, Army men, developers of the Far East. The twenty-one-year-old girl who shared my compartment and sat mouse-like for several days turned out at last to be a traffic technician. For two years she had lived in a railway car while working to help build the second track of the Trans-Siberian. She showed me with shy pride the picture of her graduating class and pointed out a stalwart youth who was standing beside her in the photograph.

"He is my special friend," she said. "We planned to come east together, but they gave him another assignment; we're meeting now in Leningrad to get married."

The wife of a Red Army commander was going back to her two-year-old baby who lives with its grandmother during the six months of each year that the wife spends with her husband in the Far East. A young woman coal-mining technician, aged twenty-five, was going to a mining conference in Novosibirsk. At one station passengers arrived from the gold fields. At another we received members of a geological survey. An army engineer who shared my table at dinner was celebrating his return by air-plane from the northern wilderness by consuming a whole bottle of port and bragging about the Far Eastern pioneers.

For thousands of miles of sparsely settled wilderness, the Soviet borders march with those of Manchukuo. The wide

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Amur River serves as boundary line to separate the Soviet settlers from the territory where, even as I passed through, Japanese troops were burning villages whose Chinese inhabitants had dared to resist. On the Soviet side of the border, the Red Army maintained very close relations with the new settlers. The Army transport often helped take them to their farming homes, while Army horses and men came in organized groups to help the farmers get in the harvest.

At the railway station bookstands, quantities of military books were on sale. There were no emotional books about the "Yellow Peril" or the "Japanese Menace." There were solid tomes on *Field Tactics of the Japanese Army*, *Tanks*, *Proposed Systems of Artillery* – all with copious diagrams and illustrations. A textbook of a thousand pages entitled *Foreign Armies* described with hundreds of diagrams the organization and tactics of every important military force in the world. A popular journal, *War Tactics Abroad*, consisted of articles culled from foreign military publications. All of it was as cool as a problem in engineering; it was a library for a military academy.

"I suppose you sell these books to Red Army commanders," I said to the young woman in charge of the stand.

"The general population buys a lot of them," she answered. "The farmers study them in study courses. Our defense is not merely a matter of the regular army, but of all citizens."

Small industries were already starting in the Jewish Autonomous Territory. They have grown very greatly since that day. Contrary to most belief abroad, Birobidjan was not planned primarily for agricultural development, though farming also flourishes with the help of an agricultural experiment station and several tractor stations. The region's chief destiny is to become an industrial district producing consumers' goods for the whole Soviet Far East, a task which especially fits the capacities of the great belt of Jews that live on the Soviet Union's western borders. (Since Hitler's invasion, many Jewish refugees have gone to Birobidjan.) The population contains skilled artisans unused to modern machines but skilled in crafts. They test out the local materials of Birobidjan, make sample products, then get big orders and credits from Khabarovsk, the Far Eastern capital, and develop factories. The Soviet Far East provides a

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hungry market for everything they make. I recall a small group of bentwood furniture makers who, after completing with much pain a dozen samples of bentwood chairs, were appalled by an order from Khabarovsk for "five thousand chairs as soon as they can be made."

In a flimsy structure that was still more than half in the open air a group of artisans were making the first farmers' carts for the new settlers. They proudly pointed out the pattern. "Two types," they said. "Both of them Army Standard from the Moscow Bureau of Standards. They are the best and strongest model and in case of need every farmer of the Far East will at once become part of a completely standardized army transport!"

I recall across the years one of the Birobidjan leaders who went on the same train with me to Moscow. His energy and teasing laughter made him the life of the train. He frequently sat in the compartment with two Red Army commanders, joshing them about the quantities of edibles they consumed and declaring that he would have them arrested for upsetting the food balance of the country. Later he told me that these two commanders gave him more delight than anything on the train. He told me of his own early life in the Ukraine amid constant pogroms. He repeated the discussions with the two Red Army commanders.

They had been asking whether the Red Army gave adequate help to the Jewish settlers. "We hear they made you a road. Was it a good one? Do they help you properly with your harvest? How are relations developing between the Red Army and the new immigrants?"

"Can you imagine what those questions mean to me, a Jew of Birobidjan?" he asked. "No, you can never imagine it, for you cannot live my life. Those Red commanders are the sons of the Cossacks who used to commit the pogroms! And now it is all gone like a dream! They want to know if they help us adequately! They are too young even to remember pogroms. But I remember; I am old enough."

Later I saw him reading Celine's *Journey to the Edge of Night*, that bitter summary of pessimism from Europe. For the first time he seemed depressed. "I have been reading again

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what horrors there are in the world,” he said. “Even in our own land there are hardships and injustices. But in the lands abroad – I tell you our old Cheka and G.P.U. were philanthropic societies compared to what we shall see in the lands abroad. Every meter of ground will be wet with tears and blood.

“Our country was once the most oppressed in the world,” he added, “and now it is the happiest. And the luckiest – oh, incredibly the luckiest! Now when the whole world slips further and further towards chaos and bitter struggle, we know that our children are safe. Oh, we shall have battles in plenty. Our border cities may suffer. But the heart of our land is safe. Our farms will expand, and our children go to school in peace through all the coming decades of great war.”

That was six years ago. He knew that the war was coming. Everyone in the Soviet Union knew. They built not only a total defense for the country as a whole, but a defense, region by region, flexible but firmly knit together for the shocks that were coming to the world.

Six:

The Modernised Red Army

The growth of the Red Army in size, equipment, and efficiency fully kept pace with the rapid development of Soviet industry. The best of everything produced in the country went into the building of the Soviet military machine. Every Soviet citizen knew quite well that he was paying for the increasing strength of the Red Army by a lower standard in his own food, clothing, and shelter. But not once in the twenty years that I have commuted between New York and Moscow have I heard a Soviet citizen begrudge the cost. Bordered in all directions by actively or potentially hostile countries, they felt the first of their needs to be defense.

An additional reason for the popularity of the Red Army is that it was never a separate institution divorced from civil life. It was always the central, specialized core of an armed people. This tradition began in the days of the Revolution. In dozens of factories in the Ukraine, which I first visited in the early 1920's, the shop committee proudly showed me collections of old rifles and shotguns kept in their "museum" near the director's office.

"These were the rifles with which we workers defended our factory from its second story," they said.

The Red Army had the advantage that it was born of Revolution and unhampered by traditions of the past. If this carried with it the disadvantage of inexperience, that fault was quickly corrected in the wars of intervention in which Soviet Russia was invaded by armies of fourteen foreign powers. The new Red Army generals were young and quick to learn from the military experience of the whole world. They were among the first in Europe to envisage the future forms of modern war. At a time when British and French military writers were still thinking in terms of the trench warfare of 1914-17 and German war effort was confined to theory by the treaty of Versailles, military writers in the Red Army journals were predicting the form of World War Two. Beginning in 1926 and thereafter, Soviet writers prophesied that future war would have the follow-

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ing three characteristics:

1. Great mobility at the beginning of the war, based on a powerful air force coordinated with highly mechanized ground troops.
2. A surprise attack that will rapidly overwhelm weak enemies with very small losses to the victor.
3. If two countries of comparatively equal strength are involved, and if the first surprise attack does not at once gain victory, the early stage of extreme mobility will pass into a relatively static war of position – though never so static as the war of 1914-17 – and the war will be decided by relative economic resources, war reserves, and the morale of the people.

Thus, the form of the second World War did not catch the Red Army unawares.

Knowledge is not enough to build an army. In those days, the Soviet Union did not possess the modern industry on which alone an army of mechanized, motorized troops can be based. From its earliest days, however, the Red Army was organized with ultimate mechanization in mind. It always had at its disposal whatever extent of modern equipment the development of the Soviet industries made possible.

The foundations of the modern Red Army were laid in 1924-25 by Mikhail Frunze and elaborated after his death by Klimenty Voroshilov, who is leading the northern armies of the Soviet Union today. A system of draft was introduced, by which every young man reported for military service during his twenty-first year. From among the million and a half who thus annually reported, the Army selected in those days only 260,000 for the regular standing army and organized another half million in territorial units who got part-time military training while continuing their civilian tasks. New military academies and special schools “polished” the fighting leaders of the civil war and gave the Red Army for the first time a full staff of officers who were both loyal and trained.

“As a result of the work in 1924-28,” reported Voroshilov later, “the Red Army got a modern structure... incorporating in its organization and training all the lessons of the World War.”

THE MODERNISED RED ARMY

The primary military object of the first Five Year Plan was to put the Red Army on wheels and wings and provide it with ultramodern weapons. The size of the Army was not at first increased. Those were the prehistoric days before Hitler's rise changed the power politics of the European continent. The armament race of Europe had not really begun. The Red Army, while not especially large, set mechanization as its goal. Even in 1928, when the Plan began, the U.S.S.R. had a fairly powerful air force, the nucleus of a future tank force, and had begun to construct a submarine fleet.

Before the end of the Plan, a few shrewd foreign observers noted the Red Army's rapid advance in modern weapons. A Polish military organ* wrote in 1931 of the "thorough way in which the Bolsheviks are carrying through the mechanization and motorization of the Red Army." The Japanese naval attaché Maede wrote in 1932 about the great number of tanks and the fact that "an enormous number of them are of the most modern type... The mechanization of the Red Army astonishes all the foreign attachés who are present at its parades."† According to Pierre Cot, the French Air Minister, who visited Moscow in 1933, the Soviet air arm was at least equal to the best in Europe in numbers, technical equipment, and, above all, in the productive capacity of the aviation industry.‡ Thus, by the end of 1932, which ended the first Five Year Plan, the Soviet Union had reached the level of Western Europe in armaments – a fairly modest level judged by standards of later years.

The really spectacular increase in the Red Army and in its equipment began after Hitler's rise to power. The threat to the U.S.S.R. that Nazi Germany implied was made plain enough by Hitler himself in his earliest books and in later statements in which he rattled the sword over the Soviet Ukraine. To meet the Hitler challenge, the Soviet military budget more than tripled in a single year, rising from 1.5 billion rubles in 1933 to 5.7

* *Polska Zbrojna*, August 4, 1931.

† *Yessu*, the organ of the Japanese Admiralty.

‡ *Vu*, July 10, 1935.

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billion in 1934. The size of the Army was increased at the same time from 562,000 to 900,000 men. The motorization of the Army increased even more.

The number of tanks and planes and military equipment generally has always been a military secret, the chief knowledge of which comes from guesses of foreign powers. The French Air Mission that visited the Soviet Union in 1936 put the production of airplanes at 5,000 annually and estimated that the U.S.S.R. had at the time 5,000 first-line planes. The figure was supported by similar estimates of Swedish and German experts and by the fact that in the May Day parades of 1935 no less than 3,000 military airplanes were seen in the air above six big Soviet cities. In the first half of 1935, Major General Guderian, who now commands the tanks of the German army of invasion, estimated the number of tanks in the Red Army at 10,000, and placed the Red Army at the head of all armies in motor transport.*

The last report given to the world from Soviet sources was Voroshilov's report to the Eighteenth Party Congress in March, 1939. It was given chiefly in percentages and announced an increase of 130% in airplanes and 191% in tanks as compared with 1934. If these figures have any relation to the guesses made by the French and Germans, they would indicate well over ten thousand planes and more than twenty thousand tanks at the time when the second World War began with Germany's invasion of Poland. It is to be assumed that tanks and planes were both rapidly increased thereafter, but the amount is unknown. First indications came from the Red Army's own admission of losses on August 24 after nine weeks of war. The size of those figures startled the world. An army that could go on fighting, admitting the loss of 7,500 guns, 4,500 planes and 5,000 tanks, was seen to have at least the second largest, if not the largest, supply of these weapons in the world.

Other official indications of the extent of the Red Army's mechanization come from Voroshilov's report in 1934 that fifty per cent of the Red Army men were already "technical specialists of various degrees, not including machine gunners." Five

* *Militarwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, December, 1935.

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years later, he reported that the "motorization quotient" (i.e., the mechanical horsepower per man) had increased from 2.6 h.p. in 1929 to 13 h.p. at the beginning of 1939, making the Red Army the most highly mechanized force in the world. He claimed that the "bomb salvo" of the Soviet air force (the number of bombs that can be dropped by all planes at once) had tripled in five years and had reached more than 6,000 tons. The artillery salvo of a Soviet Army corps was placed at 7.136 tons, compared with 6.078 tons in the German Army; the firing rate was placed at 66.6 tons of shells per minute, compared with 48.7 in the German Army. Thus the Red Army claimed not only more guns per Army corps, but a more rapid rate of fire.

Probably the best indication to the layman of the Red Army's growth since the rise of Hitler is the fact that the money allotted to it in the Soviet budget grew nearly fortyfold. From 1.5 billion rubles in 1933 it grew to 57 billion in 1940. Since this growth is much larger than any estimate of increased planes, tanks, or other equipment it indicates reserves of two kinds: reserves of supplies that have not yet appeared in battle, and basic investments in new war industry, which will begin production at some date not yet known. This throws some light on the Soviet estimate of the possible length of the war, in which they must keep in mind not only the strength of the German forces, but also Hitler's allies in many lands.

The present war has already shown that the Red Army has not only large quantities of tanks, but several new kinds of tanks. Some of the Soviet tanks have shown themselves sturdy enough to overturn German tanks of equal size in head-on collision. The Soviet-invented amphibian tanks have driven through a tidal sea for seven hours at a time. These feats are due not only to the quality of the machine, but to the fact that Red Army tank drivers have the skill born of many years' experience, beginning as tractor drivers on farms. Soviet airplane pilots also hold many world records, both in altitude and long-distance flights. Their conquest of the Arctic and its difficult weather has accustomed them to the severest conditions. Americans well remember the Soviet pilots who twice made world records by flying from Moscow to America. These were

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individual exploits, but the development of Arctic aviation on which they were based was the work of large numbers of pilots and implies a whole air tradition.

A final factor in the efficiency of the Red Army is the quality of its officers. They have always been drawn from the entire population on the basis, not of birth or social distinction, but of proficiency in the art of war. British General Wavell, who saw the Red Army maneuvers in 1936, commented on the youth of the higher officers as a favorable factor. Pierre Cot mentioned their thorough training:

They are young. They work hard. Their intellectual activity is remarkable. Everywhere in the Red Army we found laboratories, workshops, and technical equipment for independent work that aroused our admiration. There is nothing similar in our officers' training schools in Paris, Lyons, or Marseilles.*

The four chief commanders of the Soviet Army in its present war all rose from the common people. Marshal Timoshenko, defender of the central front, is the son of poor Bessarabian peasants and himself a onetime farmhand. Marshal Voroshilov, defender of Leningrad and the North, is a former locomotive mechanic, son of a railway watchman and a charwoman. Marshal Budyenny, defender of the southern front, was born of poor parents in the Cossack region of the Don and rose to fame through the exploits of his "First Red Cavalry Army." The commander of the Soviet military air force, Lieutenant-General Shmushkevich, a former longshoreman, is the son of a Lithuanian-Jewish tailor.

The process by which these men rise was illustrated very simply by the way in which the young son of my housemaid became a first lieutenant. A gawky, half-educated boy of a poor family, he entered the Moscow Ball-Bearing Works as an apprentice at the age of sixteen. He was swiftly drawn into the factory night school and soon chose as his "social work" to become a sort of amateur policeman, which meant that he took evening courses in law enforcement and helped police the big

* *L'Oeuvre*, February 19, 1935.

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parades. He had no uniform, but he had a policeman's whistle of which he was very proud. Once, when he came upon a drunken fight, I saw him blow his whistle to summon a regular uniformed policeman whom he then "assisted" in taking the drunk to jail. Minor incidents of this type showed that young Toly was developing a bent in two directions: mechanics and the handling of crowds.

I was not surprised when, on entering the Red Army, he chose the Tanks Corps, or when, after a year's service, he decided on a permanent military career. This decision, together with his abilities, enabled him to enter an Army School which trained him at army expense to be a noncommissioned officer. After serving for a time in this capacity, he was sent to a higher school, from which he emerged as junior lieutenant. This alternation of periods of service with periods of education is the path by which all would-be officers rise. Even the higher officers return to the Military Academy at intervals to keep up on the latest developments of military science.

Before the present war, the Red Army had had practical experience in three conflicts. In 1938, the Japanese attacked at Changkufeng in the Far East and were beaten. In 1939, they tried again at Nomonhan near the border of Outer Mongolia and were badly routed after a conflict of several months. In 1939-40, there occurred the war in Finland, carried on by the Leningrad Military District. Immediately after all these conflicts, leading officers engaged in them went to the Soviet military academies as teachers to share their experience. The same thing is occurring during the present Soviet-German war. Officers from the front who have learned the latest tactics of the enemy spend their periods of rest giving instruction to other officers who have not yet taken the field.

"For the first time," said Major George Fielding Eliot, "the Germans have been met by an army trained not for the war of 1918 but for the war of 1941."*

* New York *Herald-Tribune*, July 29, 1941.

Seven :

The Army and the People

The tremendous manpower of the Red Army is conceded by everyone. In the first World War Imperial Russia mobilized fifteen million men. On the same basis, with its increased population, the U.S.S.R. could put twenty million in the field. The 1939 census showed twenty-two million men between the ages of 20 and 39; a larger proportion of these can be used for the army than in other countries because so many Soviet women have been trained to take men's places in field and factory. In the fifteen years since the reorganization of the Red Army, some eleven million have received military training either in the regular Army or the territorial units. Five or six million have had very recent and thorough training and may be called the actual spearhead of the war.

The quality of this manpower, both in body, brain, and spirit, has markedly changed since tsarist days. Socialized medicine and hygiene and the care given to mothers at child-birth, physical education and sport among young people, and the steady increase in the national standard of living are all factors that have improved the national health. Army statistics have shown a steady increase in the weight, height, and chest measurements of the average recruit: in six years, average weight increased four pounds, height nearly half an inch, and chest measurement more than an inch. By 1936, the increase in physical development made it possible to change the draft age from 21 to 19 years, thus enabling young men to complete their military service before marriage and before embarking on their careers. The Moscow military district had only 0.4 per cent rejections of recruits in 1940 for reasons of defective health.

The education and military knowledge of the new recruits have also increased from year to year. In early days the Red Army had the nickname, "the Peasants' University," because the Revolutionary Armies taught reading and writing, between intervals of fighting, to the hordes of illiterate peasants who entered their ranks. As the Soviet Union progressed, and newer recruits entered with higher levels of education, the Army con-

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tinued to provide them with courses in tractor driving, bookkeeping, engineering and the many pursuits useful both to a modern army and for civil life.

A high degree of proficiency in many army activities is attained by the new recruits even before they enter the Army. This is largely due to the tremendous development of athletics and especially to the activities of the voluntary civil defense society known as Osoaviakhim. This tongue-twister is a condensation of "Society for Assistance in Defense and in Aviation-Chemical Construction." Organized in 1927 by the combining of two previous societies, it had some ten million members when the Soviet-German war began. To all of these, the society gives practical first steps in modern methods of defense.

In its earlier days, the chief emphasis of Osoaviakhim was on the development of all-round physical fitness. Its symbol, the G.T.O. badge - "Ready for Labor and Defense" - was awarded to persons who passed certain standards in walking, running, swimming, rowing, skiing, jumping, and every kind of summer and winter sport. By January 1, 1939, there were almost six million holders of this badge, and a second degree of G.T.O., requiring high-diving, parachute jumping and other difficult tests, had been won by 71,000 people. In all of tsarist Russia there were only 30,000 members of all sport and athletic clubs combined.

All over the country young people and large numbers of older people go in for every variety of sport. In the annual sports parades in Moscow and other cities, the young physical culturists march past in millions, dancing, cycling, marching, pyramiding, and even playing basketball and volleyball on the march. On these occasions various athletic clubs boast of their prowess. Young Communists of the Red Dawn Telephone Factory, for instance, hiked 5,400 miles to the Mongolian border in 180 days. Another group announced its return from climbing the Altai Mountains, covering 1,200 miles on foot. One of the most spectacular events was the Baikal-Murmansk ski run across half Asia and half northern Europe in the depths of winter. Another was a mass climb of Mt. Elbruz, an 18,465-foot mountain, some 4,000 feet higher than Mt. Blanc or Mt. Rainier - made by several hundred Caucasian peasants under the

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personal leadership of Kalmykov, the President of the Kabardinia-Balkarian Republic. (The climb was incidentally a spectacular attack on "religion," for local belief held that the demons would get you if you invaded the upper slopes.)

Parachute jumping has become a national sport in the Soviet Union. Soviet people are probably the most air-minded people in the world. Training for air-mindedness begins in the kindergarten. Small tots play the "butterfly game" and jump around with large butterflies pinned on their hair, gaining the idea that flying is fun and a natural activity. Children in their teens make jumps from "parachute towers" which are far rougher and more realistic than the parachute tower in the New York World's Fair, which was copied from them. The sport is popular not only in the cities but on the farms. Several years ago a Ukrainian farmer told me of his trip to the nearby city with a group of farm children, all of whom immediately formed in line in the recreation park to go up in a tall tower and jump off under a parachute.

"I thought it very terrifying," he said, "and wondered why the park authorities allowed it. Then I saw that my own thirteen-year-old daughter was at the head of the line. These children of today aren't afraid of anything."

At an older age, Soviet young people jump from airplanes, learn to operate gliders, or even become amateur pilots in their spare time. Every large factory, government department, and many of the larger collective farms have "aviation clubs," which are given free instruction by the government. Probably a million people in the Soviet Union have made actual jumps from parachutes. It is not surprising that the Red Army was the first to use parachute troops in active service several years before the Germans adopted them. In 1931 a small detachment of parachutists surrounded and cleaned up a bandit gang in Central Asia.

The making of airplane models by young people is taken seriously in the U.S.S.R. In 1937 over a million school children were spending after-school hours in aviation model stations. At a later stage, young people of talent create real airplanes and demonstrate them at Tushino aviation exhibitions. Owing to the wide interest in aviation and the public ownership of factories, a bright Soviet youth who invents a new type of air-

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plane may get it constructed by his factory sports club and show it off. At one of the aviation festivals I attended, I saw a score of different amateur planes, including every possible shape of flying object – short, stubby ones, long thin ones, others shaped like different kinds of insects. They added greatly to the gaiety of the occasion. Whether or not they produced any really valuable new invention, they at least encouraged the inventiveness of their makers.

By the time the second World War began, the Osoaviakhim had so trained its younger members that when Moscow and Leningrad youth were called up for Red Army training, over 60% of them were found to be “Voroshilov sharpshooters,” having already passed tests in straight-shooting and cleaning and caring for weapons. Over 600 in each city held the far higher title of “sniper,” implying an unusual degree of skill. Soviet sniping is so good that in London in 1937 the U.S.S.R. took first place among 212 teams from 28 countries in the International Small-Calibre Shooting Competition; the following year teams from the U.S.S.R. won all the first six places. In 1939, a shooting contest was carried on by correspondence with the British Association of Miniature Rifle Clubs; the Soviet teams won eighteen out of the first twenty-one places.

Besides this training given to young people, the Osoaviakhim has popularized military knowledge among the older population to the point where millions of men, women and even children can put on a gas mask, clear out bombed debris, extinguish fires, give first aid to victims of bombs or poison gas, throw hand grenades, operate telephonic, radio, and telegraphic communications and other activities. In the past two years, especially, all this training has been given a very realistic turn. Study groups in field and factory learned how to shoot, camouflage themselves, advance, hurdle obstacles, entrench themselves, fight hand-to-hand and throw grenades. These study groups then united into detachments, moved into the fields, and practiced their skill in joint maneuvers. Only a month before the Germans attacked the Soviet borders, 7,000 Moscow citizens practiced a special drill in repulsing parachute troops over the week end. The large num-

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bers of such trained citizenry, both among recruits entering the Red Army and among the older citizens assisting it, greatly add to the Soviet Union's total defense.

Millions of trained women further strengthen the defense of the country. Not only do they replace men in the civilian jobs, but hundreds of thousands of them are in the full-time services of the Red Army. They are not drafted, and they are not ordinarily permitted in the combat services; the famous "Red Amazons" and "Death Battalions" are fiction, not fact. But the Army Medical Service is full of women. (Sixty per cent of all Soviet doctors and surgeons are women; the profession might almost be called woman's work!) There are also many women in Army Supply and Communications and Engineers. One-third of the Russian engineering profession are women.

Thousands of women are airplane pilots. In the Red Air Fleet they fly ambulance planes and transports and act as air instructors teaching men. They are not allowed to fly bombers or fighters. When they begged for this right in the name of "equality," Voroshilov told them: "The terrible shock of combat is bad for the health of future mothers." In the final emergency women pilots are part of an air reserve of some 200,000 pilots, the largest air reserve in the world.

While not in the regular combat services, women often fight when emergency calls. They enter the Osoaviakhim on an equality with men; millions of them have learned to shoot. The first shock of the German invasion fell on the frontier guards who were living on the border with their families. Their women at once shared in the fighting, not so much by shooting as by handling telegraph and telephone and transporting supplies to the men. Valentina Plunsch, a young woman who had just graduated from the Medical University when the war began, went to the front as battalion surgeon; when her battalion was encircled and its commander wounded, she took command and led the battalion out of the encirclement to safety, after which she resumed her normal task of caring for the wounded.

The years that Soviet young men spend in the Army do not separate them from normal civil life. Not only do they receive considerable general education, but they are frequently called upon for special civilian tasks. They continue to exercise the

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right to vote and to be elected, which with Soviet citizens starts at the age of eighteen. Every Army unit is affiliated directly with some large civilian organization, usually a big factory, known as its "sponsor." The sponsoring factory gives the Army unit equipment for its leisure-time activities while the Army unit supplies the factory with instructors in military training. Frequently the Army's regular work is correlated with some task of civilian construction.

The Red Army, for instance, gave spectacular aid to the city of Kharkov during the building of that city's tractor plant. In the days of farm collectivization, when the growth of collectives far outran the supply of tractors, Kharkov, a Ukrainian city of considerable civic pride, decided to build a tractor plant of its own. This was a stupendous task, for the Five Year Plan had already allocated every machine, every bag of cement, and almost every nail and piece of glass, and Kharkov had to build "outside the Plan." The city challenged this almost insuperable difficulty, secured equipment by calling upon patriotic Ukrainians to produce surpluses "above the Plan" in their factories, and overcame the shortage of unskilled labor by inducing the whole population of Kharkov, office by office and factory by factory, to donate a holiday or two each month to hauling dirt or laying floors.

As the plant neared completion, an emergency appeared with which no civilian help could cope. A trench seven kilometers long and a meter deep was needed to bring the plant's water supply. Kharkov asked for the help of the Red Army, which sent on the appointed day a detachment of 7,000 men equipped with trenching tools. They took up their positions along the whole seven-kilometer line, one man to each meter. Each dug one cubic meter, his share of the trench, thus completing the entire seven-thousand-meter ditch by the end of the day. It was normal military trench-work correlated with a civil emergency.

The famous "Grasshopper War" of 1927 in Soviet Central Asia was a far bigger achievement than the Kharkov trench. It was a fight of the peasants, led by the Red Army, to save the cotton fields. Great clouds of locusts, a mile deep and tens of miles long, came flying over the Afghan border into Soviet

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Turkestan. The regional government mobilized the whole population to fight the pests and called upon the Army to help. Army airplanes scouted the skies to note where the invaders landed. The Army supplied chemicals to poison the newly hatched larvae. When the grasshoppers began to move, the people, under Army leadership, dug trenches scores of miles long and reinforced at the far side by sheets of steel sloping toward the invaders. When the hoppers fell by billions into the trenches, they were burned by flame-throwers that the Army supplied. It was a striking but typical example of the organized co-operation of Army and people.

The same pattern is followed today as the Soviet Union organizes its "war of the whole people" against the invading Nazi hordes. Groups of the population, long since accustomed to organized co-operation with the Army, form themselves into labor battalions or guerrilla bands to assist in the common defense. The whole form of the collective farm fits in admirably with military needs. Every farm has its Osoaviakhim group, which has learned sharpshooting and has its own weapons; it is a guerrilla band practically formed. Every farm has its working brigades of a hundred or more adult men and women; they can at once become labor battalions, even bringing their own cooking equipment and cooks. Every farm has its summertime nursery, served by trained nurses and the older mothers. This is an organization that can handle the children in groups and perhaps evacuate them to the interior on the same boxcars that brought up troops.

"I was terrified when I saw from the air those great masses of working people," said a German aviator in Moscow after his capture. He had been accustomed to sowing terror among fleeing, demoralized peasant populations. He himself felt terror at the sight of a confident working people organized around their Army and digging fortifications for their land.

Eight:

Smashing the Fifth Column

“How did Hitler slip up on that famous Fifth Column that won half his battles in Europe?” asked a New York friend, discussing the Soviet-German war. The question cuts very deeply into the whole political and social structure of our world today. What is the Fifth Column? It does not consist of criminals or ordinary spies, and not always of conscious traitors. It commonly consists of a fairly large group of the so-called “best people” who object to their country’s government and are ready to overthrow it even, if necessary, with the aid of foreign powers. Country after country in Europe collapsed at the first touch of the Nazi army – sometimes before the arrival of the army – because the upper officialdom had rotted from within.

Our world today is torn by divided loyalties. Class lines cut across national lines. Under the pressure of conflict people take sides in accordance with many complex motives. Prime Minister Chamberlain weakened the British Empire in order to smash democracy in Spain. American industrialists for four years have sent oil and scrap iron to strengthen Japan for war against the United States. None of these people are conscious of committing treason. Nor probably were Laval and Petain, Quisling or Wang Ching-wei, who for one reason or other were ready to head a puppet government serving an invader. By standards of nineteenth century nationalism, whose twilight we are probably seeing, the acts are treason to the nation. What the twenty-first century will call them will depend on who are the victors. The victors always write the history books.

The Soviet Union faced this same problem in a particular form. The usual basis for a Fifth Column was lacking since there were no large and conflicting private property interests. The Russian Revolution, however, had produced like all revolutions numbers of bitter, discontented people who hated the government in power. The first two years of the Five Year Plan, for instance, were marked by an epidemic of sabotage in the higher engineering staff, many of whom had formerly worked for the foreign capitalist-owners of the large properties now

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nationalized by the Revolution. Any American who worked in Soviet industry in the years of the first Five Year Plan can give you dozens of examples of sabotage by engineers.

In its simplest form this sabotage was hardly more than the making of a little graft on the side. A representative of a Cincinnati firm that sold machinery to certain Soviet industries was informed that his machines were no good. He had to fight a good deal of red tape to make the arrangements even to go from Moscow to Samara to visit the factory where the machines had supposedly failed to work. Finally he got there, forced his way in with the aid of the local police, and came to grips with a terror-stricken superintendent who admitted that the American machines had never been taken out of their boxes. This superintendent had been bribed by a German firm to send a bad report about the American machines; he had had an arrangement with a Moscow official to prevent the American's visit to Samara. The incident did not especially shock my American acquaintance; he took it as a natural business trick. To the Russians, building their publicly owned enterprises at great sacrifice, the action was a serious crime.

My own first contact with the intrigues of "foreign agents" occurred in 1930 in the farming regions, when I visited the first tractor station near Odessa. Twice on the trip I was questioned on the train by G.P.U. investigators. They were very polite; one of them was unusually courteous under provocation, for in my exhaustion from trying to find a seat in the crowded train I gave him far more impertinent answers than I would dare give a New York policeman. As soon as I convinced him that I was an American correspondent he left.

"Why is the G.P.U. so excited in this district?" I asked the car porter. "Is it because the railroad runs so close to the Rumanian border?"

"It is your Berlin leather coat," he answered. "He thought you might be one of these German agents coming in to stir up the Mennonites." Later the local farmers told me that German agents had been a factor in the sudden decision which seized large numbers of Mennonite farmers, German by descent, to "flee from the accursed atheist land." Whole villages sold or merely abandoned their houses and cattle and came in hordes

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to Moscow, demanding the right to go abroad. Many of them were induced to return to their farms, but thousands actually went abroad to Germany, and later to Brazil, to share the fate of unwanted refugees.

An American who had a supervisory job in a big auto factory told me that on one occasion he was summoned by a G.P.U. investigator who, looking at him rather suspiciously, showed him certain pieces of metal and asked if he recognized their nature.

"Of course I do," he answered frankly. "They are parts of a heavy machine gun." Apparently reassured by his frankness, the investigator then astounded him by telling him that these parts were being made in his own shop on the night shift. The offenders were eventually located as the foreman and one technician. The rest of the workers had been unaware that they were giving part of their time to equipping the secret arsenal of a traitorous gang.

At a health resort where I stayed one month in the North Caucasus during this period, several deaths occurred from poisoned canned food. Men high in the canning industry put broken glass, animal hair and fish tails into food destined for workers; men in the Commissariat of Agriculture sent confused orders which ruined the cotton harvest. A township veterinary who hated collectivization inoculated 6,000 horses with plague. An irrigation engineer in Turkestan intentionally used antiquated surveys which he knew would not deliver the water because he hated and wished to wreck the whole Soviet policy of giving land to yellow-skinned nomads on an equality with Russians.

All these cases, and thousands more like them, can be found in confessions of men who later repented, or in the tales of American engineers experienced in Soviet industry. The Russian inexperience in technical matters often made it difficult to judge whether inefficiency, carelessness, or malice caused certain acts. It must be admitted that Soviet investigators did not greatly bother about motive. If a man made the same "mistake" more than once, and had enough engineering knowledge to "know better," they called him a wrecker and put him where he could do no harm. This does not mean that they

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shot him; they usually sent him to work on a construction job in his own profession, but under the direct control of the G.P.U. As more Russians learned the technical side of industry, sabotage became more difficult, for it was more easily detected. This fact and the rapid advance of Soviet industry won many of the early saboteurs to loyalty. In 1931 Stalin announced that the engineers and technicians were "turning toward the Soviet government" and should be met by a policy of cooperation in place of the previous widespread suspicion between workers and engineers.*

While the general epidemic of engineering sabotage passed with the increase of technical knowledge among loyal circles, the more deep-seated sabotage inspired by foreign powers remained. These activities were naturally smaller in number, more discreetly conducted, and designed to flare up especially in the event of war. Even such sabotage, when it came to light in Soviet courts, was treated with increasing leniency in the years from 1931 to 1934. The condition of the country was improving, and the occasional saboteurs were not considered especially dangerous.

In the famous Shakhta case in 1928, for instance, fifty-two engineers and technicians were convicted of wrecking coal mines in the interests of foreign powers, chiefly Germany; eleven were sentenced to death, and five were actually executed. Two years later in the "Industrial Party" case, a group of engineers admitted conspiracy to wreck state industry in order to put a sort of technocratic party of engineers in control. They were sentenced to death as the law required, but were then immediately given a commutation of sentence "in view of their repentance"; shortly after this they were holding good jobs again. Similarly, a group of Mensheviks convicted in 1931 of inspiring peasant uprisings in connivance with foreign powers were given prison sentences for the announced reason that they were no longer dangerous enough to be executed. In the Metro-Vickers case in 1933, a group of Russian engineers and one Englishman admitted several minor acts of sabotage in power plants which were intended to get their hand in for a

* Conference of Managers of Industry, June 23, 1931.

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widespread wrecking of power plants in case of war. I sat less than ten feet away from the defendants and watched their faces; it was clear that most of the Russians expected the death sentence. Most of them got only nominal sentences, while the three principal offenders were given ten years.

The increasing leniency in all these cases was due to the lessened tension in the country. As the first Five Year Plan passed into the second, as Soviet workers became more skilled, an era of good feeling seemed to dawn.* Especially after the harvest of 1933 the people felt confident in their growing strength. The fear that Japan would attack, which had been so strong in 1931-32, lessened when Japan reached the Siberian borders without invading them. Hitler had come to power in Germany, but the Red Army was considerably stronger than the German forces thus far developed, and few people expected Hitler to last as long as he actually did. Litvinov was busily making nonaggression pacts with surrounding countries. It almost began to seem as though the Soviet Union might hope to escape that long-expected war.

The assassination of Kirov in early December, 1934 fell like a bomb into this dream of security. Kirov was the secretary of the Communist Party of Leningrad, one of Stalin's close associates, and considered by many his probable successor. He was assassinated by a member of the party who had easy access to the headquarters of the Leningrad committee by virtue of his membership card. A shock of dismay was felt throughout the country. It appeared that not only "bourgeois-minded engineers," but supposedly loyal Communists might hate the party leadership enough to commit murder. The shock intensified when the first investigations indicated connections with foreign powers, i.e., Germany, via one of the Baltic states.

The Soviet secret police had long guarded against routine foreign espionage. In ten years they caught no less than ten thousand agents of foreign powers, creeping illegally across their borders. But the investigation of the Kirov murder led into higher and higher ranks of the Communist Party, and seemed to indicate connection with the enemy even in these

* See Chapter Four.

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ranks. It was the first time that any nation in Europe began to glimpse the tactics that the world today knows as the Nazi Fifth Column – the penetration by the enemy into the citadel of power itself. The technique was not at that time understood; Soviet investigators seemed to have had difficulty in grasping it. More than a year and a half passed in investigations and arrests before the Chief Prosecutor of the U.S.S.R. brought to trial before the Supreme Court of the country the so-called “Leningrad Center,” the first of several groups of self-confessed conspirators.

The trials that began on August 16, 1936 with the “Leningrad Center” – Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others – continued through other trials, both national and local in scope, until they culminated on June 11, 1937 with the court-martial and execution of eight of the most prominent Red Army generals on charges of high treason. It was probably the most spectacular series of treason trials in human history. I well remember how they shook Moscow, and the storm of skepticism they aroused throughout the world. As if anticipating some such reaction, the Soviet government held the trials of the chief leaders in a fairly large hall and opened them to a constantly changing stream of delegates from Moscow factories and government departments, as well as to the foreign diplomatic corps and to the Soviet and foreign press. None of the onlookers was unshaken by the spectacle of what an American author was later to call – after it had destroyed many nations – “the corroding, paralyzing perfection of the Nazis’ technique of conquest from within.”

“It is an appalling event; one feels the naked play of those dark forces which shatter and rot human souls,” said a sophisticated foreign observer to me. A Russian worker answered more simply, “I don’t want to talk about it. I feel the need of a bath.” My own deepest impression at the trials I attended was that of the moral disintegration of the defendants and the process by which it had been reached. It had begun far back in honest differences of opinion; it had degenerated into naked lust for power and a hatred that enveloped everything, even the fellow conspirators. “Let him not pretend to be such an innocent,” cried Reingold in court of his codefendant Kame-

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nev. "He would have made his way to power over a mountain of corpses."

The story that emerged was that of a plot to seize power by assassinating several government leaders through agents, who, if caught, would not even know the identity of their chiefs, but would appear to be ordinary agents of the German Gestapo. The chief conspirators, their reputations still intact, would call for "party unity" and the burying of all past hatchets to meet the emergency, and in the confusion would gain leading posts. One of them, Bakayev, was slated to be chief of the G.P.U. and would use the post to liquidate the agents who had done the actual murders, thus burying all evidence of the higher-ups' crime. Some of the lesser agents apparently first learned in court the fate that their chiefs had reserved for them, and this greatly added to the venom with which they denounced those chiefs.

The reason for the conspiracy was given by Kamenev, brother-in-law of Trotsky, and himself a prominent leader in earlier years, who had been sidetracked by his long opposition to Stalin's policies, especially to the Five Year Plan. Kamenev said that by 1932 it became clear that Stalin's policies had been accepted by the people and that all hopes of overthrowing him by political means had failed. "There remained two roads... either honestly to end the struggle against the government, or to continue it... by means of individual terror. We chose the second road. We were guided in this by boundless bitterness against the leadership... and by a thirst for power to which we had once been near." Zinoviev, former chief of the Communist International and later dropped because of unwillingness to follow the Stalin policy of noninterference by the Soviet government in other nations' internal affairs, said that he had grown so accustomed to giving orders to large groups of people that he could not endure life without it. Several of the minor agents connected the group with the German Gestapo; N. Lurye claims to have worked "under the practical guidance of Franz Weitz, personal representative of Himmler."

In subsequent trials of related groups, the hand of Nazi Germany was several times exposed. Pyatakov, former chief of Soviet state industry, said that he had met Trotsky abroad in

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1935 and learned that the latter had made a deal with Rudolph Hess for Nazi support in the overthrow of the Stalin regime. In return for this, Germany was to get opportunities for investments throughout Russia and a special sphere of influence in the Ukraine through a puppet state. Other indications of German plotting came almost simultaneously from an entirely different quarter in far away Novosibirsk. In November, 1936, eight Soviet executives and one German engineer pled guilty to sabotage, which had wrecked coal mines and caused the death of miners; the German engineer's testimony implicated the German consul in Novosibirsk.

Most of the foreign press at the time denounced the trials as a frame-up. Most foreign observers who sat at the trials found them credible, even if shocking. D. N. Pritt, a British Member of Parliament, wrote a pamphlet stating his convictions that the men were guilty as charged. Edward C. Carter, Secretary General of the Institute of Pacific Relations, wrote: "It makes sense and is convincing.... The confessions seem both normal and purposeful.... The theory that it was a frame-up is untenable.... It was not a device to secure removal of critics.... The Kremlin's case was genuine, terribly genuine."*

To me personally, as I sat in the trials, it was not so difficult to follow the path by which once revolutionary leaders had become self-confessed traitors. They had begun by doubting the Russian people's capacity to build a strong and independent state based on publicly owned enterprise; this had been the open cleavage in the party discussions in the 1920's. Their doubt was deepened by the contrasts between Russia's tremendous inefficiencies and the efficient German organization they saw on their trips abroad. It was not so difficult to believe that Russia might profit by a little German discipline impressed by the iron heel; plenty of irritated people made such remarks. Eventually there might be a European revolution in which German workers would lead. Meantime they would capitalize the situation to destroy the Stalin leadership they hated, and bargain with Hitler for as much of Russia as they could get. It is the deadly argument by which the Nazis have again

* *Research Bulletin of American-Russian Institute*, March 30, 1937.

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and again secured a solid foothold among a discontented minority of the ruling group.

Step by step the investigations, arrests, and trials involved wider circles. Three days after the first trial opened, Tomskey, former chairman of the Central Council of Trade Unions, who had been mentioned in court by one of the defendants, confessed his guilt and committed suicide rather than face arrest. A former president of the Ukraine, Lyubchenko, committed suicide in the same manner. Regional trials began in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Far East. In the Tadjik Republic, on the borders of India, several of the highest officials were removed as "enemies of the people." In the Far East, the chief of the G.P.U. fled to Japan, and many of his subordinates were arrested as Japanese spies and wreckers.

The first indication that the trail had led to the Red Army was the suicide on June 1, 1937, of Marshal Gamarnik, chief of the Red Army's political commissars. Eight days later Voroshilov announced that four important commanders, including Marshal Tukhachevsky, who had only recently been vice-commissar of defense, had been removed from their posts. These four and an additional four were tried by court-martial on July 11th, before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court – the first of the big trials to be held in secret. They pled guilty to high treason and were sentenced to death. The Moscow press announced that they had been in the pay of Hitler and had agreed to help him get the Ukraine. This charge was fairly widely believed in foreign military circles, and was later substantiated by revelations made abroad. Czech military circles seemed to be especially well informed. Czech officials in Prague bragged to me later that their military men had been the first to discover and to complain to Moscow that Czech military secrets, known to the Russians through the mutual aid alliance, were being revealed by Tukhachevsky to the German high command.*

* G. E. R. Gedye, Prague correspondent for the New York Times, also cabled on June 18, 1937, that "two of the highest officials in Prague told him they had definite knowledge for at least six months that secret connections between the German General

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What probably startled Soviet citizens most was the appalling fact that the treason trials at last implicated Yagoda, chief of the formidable G.P.U. It must be realized that most Soviet citizens regard their G.P.U. much as the Americans do the F.B.I., an organ which they wish to fight shy of themselves, and which occasionally goes to extremes, but which is necessary for national protection and acts on evidence. The G.P.U. has always disclaimed – I think truthfully – the use of Gestapo forms of torture, and even of the American third degree.* In connection with the arrest of Yagoda, other arrests of local G.P.U. officials occurred in many cities, on the charge of “arresting innocent citizens” and “using improper methods to extort confessions.” They were given the severest sentences, for the crime was considered of the very gravest nature. But such arrests began to throw doubt on the whole investigating arm of the government. If that was rotten, what could be believed?

The answer was plain: in the last resort you can trust the common people rather than any apparatus or official. The entire membership of the Communist Party was therefore subjected to what is called a “cleansing” or “purge”† in the presence of large audiences of their non-Communist fellow workers. Each Communist had to relate his life history and daily activities in the presence of people who were in a position to check them. It was a brutal experience for an unpopular presi-

Staff and certain high Russian generals had existed ever since the Rapallo treaty.”

* Harold Denny, in the New York Times, January 15, 1939, wrote: “In almost five years’ residence, trying to learn the facts, I have found no evidence which I consider trustworthy that physical torture is applied to prisoners... I am convinced that there does not occur, unless in isolated and exceptional instances, the sadistic cruelties reported from German prison camps or even the beating with rubber hoses bestowed, as every American police reporter knows, in the backrooms of many American police stations.”

† This is the only connection in which the Soviet people use the term “purge.” Its application by Americans to all the Soviet treason trials and in general to Soviet criminal procedure is resented by Soviet people.

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dent of a Moscow university to explain to an examining board in the presence of his students why he merited the nation's trust. Or for a superintendent of a large plant to expose his life history and daily activities – even to his wife's use of one of the factory automobiles for shopping – in the presence of the plant's workers, any one of whom had the right to make remarks. This was done with every Communist throughout the country; it resulted in the expulsion of large numbers from the party, and in the arrest and trial of a few. In March, 1939, the Eighteenth Party Congress finally abolished these general "purges" as too severe. They had, however, firmly established the tradition that every Communist must be judged by the court of his fellow workers, who have other, less spectacular ways of making their pressure known.

Appeals to the "watchfulness of the people" against spies and saboteurs filled the press and became the theme of motion pictures. Pamphlets told "how the spy acts." "Don't talk in the street cars about your factory," said these pamphlets. "You may be giving information that will help the enemy locate our war industries." The Soviet people understood; the happy, expansive, loquacious mood that once made them so endearing was replaced by a stern mood of watchfulness and suspicious silence, especially toward foreigners. They were "on guard"; they shut up for the duration of the coming war.

Those years from 1937 to 1938 are remembered by all Soviet citizens as a time of mental distress caused by the widespread suspicion and often unexplained arrests. The arrests affected chiefly the upper party circles and those officials dealing with foreigners; hence they seemed to foreigners more extensive than they were. None of the arrests was as wanton as the foreign press portrayed them; evidence of some sort was indicated. The common sentence was not execution, but swift removal to another job in another part of the country. Fairly large numbers of such transfers seemed to have occurred merely on suspicion, on the theory that if the suspects were guilty, or had guilty connections, the transfer would break these up; if they were innocent they would not suffer much from a job transfer and would come back to Moscow eventually if they chose. Naturally such people did not hasten to communicate with

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their foreign acquaintances during their absence, and this often led the latter to assume that the Russians had been "liquidated." A year or two later, large numbers of such people returned, none the worse for their temporary job in the "sticks."

Three personal experiences will indicate what happened during this period to the minds and the character of the Soviet people. I spent a whole summer on the shores of the Moscow River, not far from the little suburb of Fili. I knew that there was a great industrial plant in Fili. Many times I saw Fili workers marching thousands strong with their banners in parade. Years later, in New York, after the German-Soviet war began, I read in the papers that the famous six-motor bombers, in some way surpassing the American "flying fortress," are made in the Fili plant. If that is true, I know how every Fili worker must have longed to brag of it to me, an American. Nobody ever did. They were so silent that I am not yet certain whether the bomber tale is true.

Once, at a May Day celebration, I learned that several score Americans were deeply disappointed because they had come to Moscow to see the demonstration and there was no place for them in

Red Square. I suggested that they might march with the staff of the *Moscow Daily News*, thus seeing the Square in passing. The representative of the Soviet Tourist Agency answered, "We should be very grateful if you can take them, but - do you know them all well enough to give your personal guarantee that they have no pistols or bombs?" That settled it. I refused to guarantee sight unseen even my fellow countrymen. I had heard that agents of foreign countries had come to the U.S.S.R. as American workers or tourists. After this, I noticed that the ranks of the Soviet workers in a demonstration will never let an outsider join them. Each group knows its fellow factory members and takes responsibility for its own ranks.

Once, during the trials, I spoke to a Soviet friend about what I called "excessive severity." I knew that his wife had lost her job for some mere "laxness" in trusting German agents, and that he himself had had a rather grueling time in the party cleaning. I mentioned cases of "innocent victims." He agreed that there might be such. "Let them take it up with their depu-

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ty," he told me. "The deputies of the Supreme Soviet just now are handling lots of such complaints. People who are conscious of innocence and fight for it will eventually come back."

"Why don't you see the basic picture?" he added. "Our leading economists – and some British bourgeois economists also – think that the world will crash about 1939. By crash I mean a military crisis like that of 1914, superimposed on an economic crisis like that of 1929. It may be a half year sooner or later, but the greatest crash mankind has ever known is clearly due. The coming struggle will decide whether the world must go down in the Dark Ages of slavery and wars, or whether mankind can win through to a decent world.

"In this great struggle where is there any sure foundation? Only here in our Soviet land, where for twenty years we have been building and testing the social forms fit for a technically developed and civilized world. It would have been easier for humanity, I grant you, if you Americans had done it first. You could have organized these forms of socialism swiftly without our terrible waste motion, perhaps without the cost we pay in human life. You could have swiftly built 'plenty for all.' You didn't do it. So it is we, we backward peasant Russians, who have to save the world.

"What is our duty to the coming world crisis? We must come up to it with as much wheat as possible, as much iron and steel as possible, as many healthy people as possible, and as few wreckers as possible. We are going to do it. With our two Five Year Plans completed, we can do it. Those who doubt it are traitors not only to our Soviet country but to mankind. You are concerned with these people's psychology. To hell with their psychology! Whether it is guilt or exhaustion, fine feelings or high treason, whatever spreads doubt and defeatism among our people must be cleaned out."

Looking back at those words from the war that has broken, I know why the Soviets have no Fifth Column. I know what it cost them – what it would cost any nation to clean its potential Fifth Column out.

Nine:

The Fight for Peace Fails

Paradoxically enough, it took the Soviet-German war to convince certain circles in Washington that the U.S.S.R. is a peace-loving land. They noted that we have not had to worry about defending Alaska in all the years that the Soviets have been our next-door neighbors, but that it would be another story if Japan or Nazi Germany should gain a foothold in the Soviet Far East.

It was a belated recognition of a fact which much of the world has known. For the first twenty-two years of its existence, the Soviet Union gained a wide and deserved reputation both as a non-aggressive neighbor and as a champion of worldwide peace. This Soviet policy began long before Litvinov dinned it into the ears of the League of Nations, a sounding board from which he reached the world. The first official act of the new Bolshevik government on November 8, 1917, the day after they had taken power, was "to propose to all warring peoples and their governments to begin immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace." Such a peace they described as a "peace without annexations and without indemnities," a phrase later made famous by President Woodrow Wilson, who borrowed it from the Bolsheviks.

A standard of international justice without precedent was shown by the first actions of the young Soviet power. Its statesmen denounced and exposed the secret treaties by which imperial Russia had agreed with Britain and France to divide the world. They annulled the unequal treaties old Russia had imposed on Turkey, Iran, and China, which divided these countries into spheres of influence of the imperialist powers. By withdrawing their armies from Iran, denouncing tsarist claims to Constantinople, renouncing extraterritoriality in China, they laid foundations for friendly relations with all these states. But they were unable to win their Anglo-French allies to the idea of "peace without annexations" and were forced to sign a separate peace in which they submitted to Germany's robber demands. Even after Germany was defeated by Russia's

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former allies, the allied powers themselves invaded Russia for two and a half years.

In the lowest depths of exhaustion, Lenin was even willing to agree to the splitting up of Russian territory in return for peace. The proposal made by William Christian Bullitt when he went to Moscow in March, 1919, as President Wilson's semi-official representative, was that the territory of Russia should be divided among all the local puppet governments that might be in armed possession at the moment when peace should be signed. This implied a Japanese puppet state in the Soviet Far East, and British or French puppet states holding the Ukraine, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Arctic ports. Lenin agreed to this incredible holdup because the Russian people were dying by millions of starvation, pestilence, and war. "We will retreat to the Urals if need be," was Lenin's decision. Even on these terms the powers at Versailles refused to grant peace to the Bolsheviks, choosing rather to destroy them utterly.

Not by appeals for peace nor by offers of territory, but by the courage and sacrifice of the Russian people were peace and independence finally won. To the peace-hungry land of those days, real peace came very slowly: first the cessation of actual battle, then trade agreements, then after many years diplomatic recognition. At each stage the strength of the new Soviet state was tested by the great capitalist powers, who were unwilling to grant it the right to exist.* The first admission of the young state to any international conference was at the Genoa Conference of 1922, called by the victorious allies in the hope of dumping the burden of a bankrupt, postwar Europe on the backs of Soviet Russia and vanquished Germany. The prospective victims had to be present in order to accept the burden.

At this first emergence in the councils of nations, the Soviets made a plea for limitation of armaments. "The forces directed toward restoration of world economy," said Georges Chicherin,

* The last invasions were in 1920 by the Poles, with French assistance, and in 1920-21 by the Finns under Baron Mannerheim. The Japanese were not driven out of Vladivostok until October 24, 1922. American relations with the U.S.S.R. were not resumed until 1933.

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the leader of the Soviet delegation, "will be strangled as long as above Europe and above the world hangs the threat of new wars." Failing to get response to this proposal, he startled the world by signing with Germany the famous Rapallo agreement in which the two orphan children of the conference renewed friendly relations on the basis of equality, each cancelling the other's debts. It was the first move of any nation to treat the vanquished Germany on such a basis. Had it been followed by other nations in those days when the Germans aspired towards democracy, Hitler Germany would never have arisen.

A new and daring diplomacy thus appeared in the world arena. It sought two aims: to strengthen world peace and to assist the national independence of the weaker powers. These aims were not only in consonance with Soviet ideology; they were based on the Soviet Union's own needs. Peace and a chance to rebuild was the need of the nation; its own great territory was large enough for all possible expansion. Its peace was most likely to be cracked by the imperialist hungers of the major powers; its natural allies were among the weaker and colonial peoples. Other allies existed among the common people of even the imperialist nations; for in no land do the common folk normally want war. Perfect peace the Soviets believe to be impossible under capitalism. But conflicts vary in extent and intensity. They especially sought peace on their own borders, and also what might be termed a maximum of world peace. Even the idea that world war might promote world revolution was discountenanced. "The Soviet Union needs no foreign wars for transforming the world," said Manuilsky, Russian delegate to the Congress of the Third International in 1935.

"Peace is indivisible," said Soviet diplomacy, in the person now of the busy Litvinov, shuttling to world congresses to argue that an aggression tolerated anywhere was likely to spread and to threaten the peace of all. He made his world reputation first at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, where he annoyed the British and French delegates by suggesting that the powers should really disarm. The Soviets were the first to sign the Kellogg Pact, proposed by the United States; they were the first to sign any international peace pact or proposal, sometimes before they were invited. Litvinov won a wide support

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among peace-loving groups around the world, but without much affecting the policies of Britain or France.

Some of the smaller or weaker governments, however, began rather grudgingly to rally around the U.S.S.R. in return for benefits received. Turkey's existence as a modern independent state is due in part to the help given by the Soviet Union on various occasions, chiefly at the Lausanne Conference in 1923. The modern government of China owes its beginnings largely to the help given by the Soviets to Dr. Sun Yat-sen. Later the U.S.S.R. took the initiative in urging the League of Nations to help Ethiopia by applying sanctions to Italy; she was the only power that fully carried out all sanctions on which agreement could be reached. Still later, when Britain and France connived with Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy to overthrow Spanish democracy, the Soviet Union shared with Mexico the honor of being the only governments that aided the democratic government of Spain.

The rise of Hitler changed all the power politics of Europe. Germany and Japan left the League of Nations, and the Soviet Union entered it, with the announced purpose of strengthening it against the warlike tendencies of the rising Nazi aggression. For years the Soviets had supported the German Republic's demand for peaceful revision of the Versailles Treaty, which they considered an evil treaty, provocative of war. Nazi aggressions, however, were even more provocative of war than the Versailles Treaty. Litvinov's new policy, therefore, became to seek alliances among the "democratic forces" in order to check aggressors.

Tory Britain hastened to build up Hitler. British diplomacy granted to Hitler Germany everything that it had refused for more than a decade to the German republic: the remilitarization of the Rhineland, the Nazi-terrorized plebiscite in the Saar, German rearmament and naval expansion, the Hitler-and-Mussolini intervention in Spain. British finance, which had strangled the struggling German democracy with demands for impossible war reparations, supported Hitler's regime with heavy investments and loans. It was no secret to any intelligent world citizen that the British Tories made these concessions to Hitler because they saw in him their "strong-arm gangster"

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who would eventually fight the Soviets, which important sections of British finance capital have always seen as their greatest foe.

If any doubt remained as to the motives of the British and French foreign offices, it was removed at the Munich Conference. Munich – with its cynical sellout of Czechoslovakia – was the trump card of the Tory ruling class in its game of driving Germany toward the East. The British Prime Minister Chamberlain posed as “appeasing” Hitler, while actually egging him on. Chamberlain suggested that the Sudetenland might be given to Hitler before anyone in Germany had dared to express such a desire.* Chamberlain’s personal representative, Lord Runciman, went to Prague as “mediator” and suggested to the Germans other demands, which they had not yet put forth. In the final showdown, when the freedom-loving Czechs seemed likely to fight rather than let Germany invade their country, the British and French Ministers forced compliance by threatening Dr. Eduard Benes, the Czech President, that if he resisted Hitler, Britain and France might adopt toward him the policy of “nonintervention” with which they had already murdered Spain. Almost as soon as the Nazi troops marched into the Czech territory, it was discovered that representatives of London finance had agreed with German industrialists some weeks earlier about the financing of the great enterprises thus seized.

I was spending my vacation at a health resort in the North Caucasus when the news of the Munich Conference arrived. Everybody there – Soviet officials, factory managers, and workers – was deeply aware of the world importance of that event. They were shocked at the brazenness of the Munich method and the peremptory way in which British and French ambassadors beat down Dr. Benes, but they were not greatly surprised. Long since, they had known what to expect of Daladier and Chamberlain. What surprised them most was that it could so easily be put over on the British and French people as a “peace settlement.” They had expected more intelligence there.

In the brief days when the Czechs declared resistance, a

* At the luncheon given in the spring of 1938 to British and Canadian journalists.

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cheerful approval filled the health resort. A few highly-placed officials, military and diplomatic, made tentative airplane reservations back to Moscow. "We may have to go back to support the Czechs." Then came the news that Benes had capitulated, and they canceled the reservations. "There is nothing we can do now," one of them said to me at dinner. "Better stay on here and get my health in good condition for the next crisis, when the attack comes – possible on Poland or France."

There was a brief discussion that first evening about the forces behind that Munich settlement. Why was Daladier willing to sacrifice twenty-seven good Czech divisions, and the Czech "Maginot Line" of fortifications? What made him give to his enemy, Hitler, one of the most famous armament plants in Europe – the Skoda Works? Was he a conscious traitor, or weak? The manager of a local industry, who lived in the Caucasus because of tuberculosis, said, "You can explain it in four words: They're afraid of Bolshevism."

"They're worse than that," replied a man from Moscow. "They're afraid now even of their own democracy. They don't dare let either the Czech democracy or the People's Front of France survive. They will stamp out both the eastern and western centers of democracy in Europe to save their stranglehold on the world." – It was quite clear whom he meant by "they": not Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, or Mussolini, but the reactionary sections of high finance, with strongholds in the city of London and in Wall Street and with stooges in all the European lands.

With rapid acceleration Hitler's aggression now moved toward the Soviet borders, seeming to receive encouragement from the Chamberlain government at every step. On March 15, 1939, in an act of insolent international outrage, the German forces marched into disarmed Prague. On March 18th, the Soviet government informed Germany that it "could not recognize" the annexation of Czechoslovakia. Moscow at once proposed to Britain an immediate conference of Britain, France, the U.S.S.R., Poland, Rumania, and Turkey, to devise joint means of resisting further aggressions. Chamberlain replied that the proposals were "premature." As if on signal, Hitler, on March 22nd, seized Memel, chief seaport of Lithuania; he rat-

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tled the sword over Danzig, the other chief port in the south-eastern Baltic Sea. Mussolini, not to be left behind, seized Albania on April 7th, "and at once called five more classes of reservists to the colors. By mid-April seven German divisions stood on the border of Poland awaiting the order to march; provocative incidents began, increasing with the advance of summer. The U. S. State Department, according to Alsop and Kintner, was told by its representatives abroad that 'the highest French officials put the chances of war at ten to one.' "

While the Nazi-Fascist forces marched east in full battle array, important voices were raised in Britain and France, demanding a military alliance with the U.S.S.R. "Russian aid is vital to the democracies," said Pierre Cot, France's former Air Minister. "Unity with the U.S.S.R. can save peace," said Lloyd George, Britain's former Prime Minister. A Gallup poll taken during April found 92 percent of the British voters in favor of an alliance with the U.S.S.R.* The Soviets themselves were suggesting various forms of a triple alliance among Britain, France, and the U.S.S.R. to guarantee both eastern and western Europe against further Nazi aggression. Each of these suggestions was put on ice by the Chamberlain government for a fairly long time and then turned down. Questions asked in the House of Commons about the Soviet-British discussions were evaded by Chamberlain.

Throughout the critical months of April and May the Chamberlain government not only evaded or refused Soviet proposals for alliance, but seemed to be seeking a further agreement with Hitler. Sir Nevile Henderson, British Ambassador to Berlin, told Hitler that Britain wanted an "amiable settlement" of the Polish question, which was diplomatic language implying that Britain would use diplomatic pressure to help Germany to Danzig and the Polish Corridor. To an anxious questioner in the House of Commons who wanted to know about the Soviet proposals, Chamberlain replied that the government "was not anxious to set up opposing blocs of countries," i.e. that he rejected the anti-Hitler coalition. Under pressure of popular demand the British Foreign Office signed "guarantees"

* N. Y. *Herald-Tribune*, May 4, 1939.

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to Poland and Rumania, but avoided full alliance and refused to grant Poland's request for a small five-million-pound loan for armaments. On May 3rd, Chamberlain startled the House of Commons by saying that he was ready for a Nonaggression Pact with Germany! Two days later he informed the U.S.S.R. that her proposal for a military alliance was unacceptable.

Demands for alliance with the U.S.S.R. now arose even from conservative quarters. Winston Churchill said in the House of Commons on May 27th:

If His Majesty's Government, having neglected our defenses, having thrown away Czechoslovakia with all that Czechoslovakia means in military power, having committed us to the defense of Poland and Rumania, now rejects and casts away the indispensable aid of Russia, and so leads in the worst of ways into the worst of wars, they will have ill deserved the generosity with which they have been treated by their fellow countrymen.

At last, ten vital weeks after Hitler's seizure of Prague, the British and French Ambassadors in Moscow were instructed on May 27th to "agree to discuss" a triple alliance. After another delay of three weeks, a special representative of the British Foreign Office, Mr. Strang, arrived in Moscow to handle the discussions but without authority to conclude them. A day-by-day study of the seventy-five days in which discussions continued showed that the Soviets felt great need of haste, while the British representatives delayed. The British took fifty-nine of the seventy-five days to prepare their answers, while the supposedly slow Russians took sixteen. Even while the discussions went on, Lord Halifax, then Foreign Minister, made a speech in the House of Lords which clearly implied distaste for the pact that was under discussion. The chief bombshell during this period, however, was the disclosure toward the end of July that the British Parliamentary Secretary of Overseas Trade, Mr. Hudson, had been discussing with a German official, Herr Wohltat, the loan of half a billion, or even a billion, pounds to Germany.

The Moscow leaders saw war approaching ever closer. It seemed to them that the British spokesmen trifled, or, worse,

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that they chose to send war East. Far-seeing Britons were also deeply disturbed by the situation. "The world is trembling on the brink of a great precipice," said Mr. Lloyd George in a bye-election campaign. Most British opinion, however, was lulled by the discussions going on in Moscow and the belief that the proposed alliance was getting somewhere.

Twice Moscow attempted to break through to the British people and let them know that the hoped-for alliance was failing. On May 3rd Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Foreign Minister, resigned. Anywhere in Europe the resignation of a Foreign Minister is a declaration to the world that his policies have failed. For nearly two decades Litvinov had symbolized to the world a certain program: a program of peace, secured through alliance of the world's democratic forces. It was, of course, not Litvinov's personal policy; it was the policy of the whole government of the U.S.S.R. Yet Litvinov personally symbolized it; his long residence in Britain and his British wife gave him personal connections with the Western democracies. Perhaps this led him to overestimate the strength of the democratic forces in France and Britain, and to believe that the British and French people might control the imperialist, semi-fascism of Chamberlain and Daladier.

The forces of democracy had failed and Litvinov with them. They had failed in Manchuria, in Abyssinia, in Spain, in China, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, in Albania, in Memel – eight years of failure. They were about to fail in Poland; a signal was needed. Litvinov's resignation was that signal. The British press, however, was so accustomed to treating the Soviets with triviality that after the first slight shock they implied that Litvinov had been "liquidated" by Stalin for some imagined fault. Meanwhile, Litvinov himself quietly began to work on his new task, the writing of the history of Soviet foreign affairs during a certain epoch. The epoch was over. The policies had failed.

Six weeks later Moscow gave a second signal. On June 29th Andrei Zhdanov, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Supreme Soviet and known to be one of Stalin's very closest co-workers, published an article in *Pravda*. He openly declared that the negotiations with France and Britain were

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making no progress and that he, for one, did not believe that the British and French really desired an alliance or had any intention of resisting Nazi aggression. He bitingly implied that the chief reason for the negotiations might be to keep Moscow quiet while Hitler prepared his attack. The article created a brief sensation abroad, but most of the comments intimated that Zhdanov was, after all, a bit of a hothead.

On the brink of the great precipice, as Lloyd George had called it, the Soviet leaders made one last attempt. Toward the end of July, when the European Foreign Offices all knew that Hitler intended to seize Danzig and the Polish Corridor within a month, Moscow suggested that Britain and France send a military mission to Moscow to discuss the mutual defense of Eastern Europe on the spot. The Soviets received what they considered another symbolic slap in the face. The British and French military missions waited ten days before leaving, and traveled by the slowest vessel that could have been chartered, taking six days to get to Moscow, which they could have reached in one day by air. When they arrived, it was discovered that they had no authority to agree to anything, but had to report even minor details back to London. (Members of the mission later bragged that they had gone to learn all they could about Soviet military strength, while telling as little as possible about their own.) Meanwhile, Britain adjourned the political discussions, recalling Mr. Strang by air.* Approach to Moscow, this seemed to say, was slow and difficult, but to break with Moscow was easy and quick.

The Soviet Commissar of War, Klimenty Voroshilov, with a whole galaxy of the highest Soviet military officials, sat in the conference and made serious proposals to an Anglo-French mission which had no authority to accept them. The Soviet Union proposed, if Hitler should invade Poland, to send two Soviet armies – one against East Prussia in the north, and the other through Southern Poland against Central Germany. The

* The issue at the moment was the Soviet demand that the Baltic States be included in the guarantee against German attack or a Nazi-inspired internal seizure of their governments. Britain refused.

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Anglo-French mission replied that they would take the proposal up with Warsaw. They later reported that the Polish government would not accept any Soviet aid and were prepared to meet a German attack without it. The refusal at first applied only to the passage of Soviet troops, but was later expanded into a refusal by Poland of any Soviet aid at all. On this the negotiations broke down.

"A frivolous make-believe at negotiations" were the scathing words applied to the British and French attitude by V. M. Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars in his report to the August session of the Supreme Soviet.

Swiftly, and at what seemed the last moment, the Soviet Union made its decision. Germany was already offering a non-aggression pact. Hitler himself admitted later that the request came from him.* On August 23rd, a nonaggression pact was signed between Germany and the Soviet Union, after a conversation that lasted about three hours. It was not an alliance, such as the U.S.S.R. had offered to France and Britain; it was little more than a reaffirmation of a former treaty of neutrality that the U.S.S.R. and Germany had signed in 1926, but which had fallen into disuse under Hitler. The U.S.S.R. signed it, according to Molotov's report later, because the military negotiations with France and Great Britain had reached an impasse. "As the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance [with Britain and France] could not be expected, we could not but explore other possibilities of insuring peace and eliminating the danger of war between Germany and the U.S.S.R."

The signing of that pact at that moment when all Europe tensely awaited the hour of Hitler's march into Poland, changed the balance of forces in Europe. From most of the European capitals the first reactions were peaceful and even mildly approving. The tension in Berlin lessened; an American radio dispatch apologized, "It is hard to believe that this city is the center of a war threat; people are going on week ends to swim and sun-bathe at the lakes." From Warsaw, Colonel Beck, the Foreign Minister, stated that the situation was "fundamentally unchanged" since "Poland never expected any military aid

* In his declaration of war against the U.S.S.R., June 22, 1941.

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from Russia and did not want any.”* A dispatch from Bulgaria read, “The tension has been lessened in Eastern Europe.” Rumania immediately offered a nonaggression pact to Hungary and Poland approved. Cables from Latvia and Esthonia said: “Since our two great neighbors – with both of whom we have nonaggression treaties – have decided to maintain peaceful relations with each other, tension along the Baltic is relieved.” The East European states evidently felt that the pact between Germany and the U.S.S.R., even if it did not stop what seemed almost inevitable war in the Polish Corridor, would at least prevent the eastward spread of that war.

Much less cheerful were Hitler’s allies. Mussolini obviously disapproved; a disgusted Franco announced from Madrid that he no longer took orders from Berlin. Most terrible of all was the blow to Tokyo, which had started the war against the U.S.S.R. in April at Nomonhan on the borders of Mongolia, and was reported to have told Hitler that the Japanese would be ready by the end of August to join “the big push.” Japan reacted to the Soviet-German nonaggression pact by the fall of her Cabinet, bitter denunciation of the Germans, and immediate cessation of her warlike provocations of Britain in Tientsin, Shanghai, and Hong-Kong.

Most wrathful of all were the voices that rose from London as the pact’s implications smote Hitler’s Tory supporters. For the first time they howled for Hitler’s blood. This gangster whom they had for years fattened to fight the Bolsheviks had dared make peace with the Bolsheviks! He must be taught his lesson. Yet hope died hard in the Chamberlain government. Five days after the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was signed, Sir Nevile Henderson, British Ambassador to Berlin, still intimated to the Germans on August 28 that they might hope for a full alliance with Britain if they “cooperated with him” i.e., with Chamberlain.† Even after the German Army had marched into Poland, Chamberlain still sought for nearly two days a conference of the four Munich powers, Britain, France,

* U. P. dispatch, August 23, 1941.

† *British Blue Book*, Penguin Special S 45.

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Germany and Italy, to settle Poland's fate and to isolate the U.S.S.R.*

It was too late. Against the warnings of Winston Churchill and many others, the Chamberlain government had rejected the ally they most needed, the Soviet Union in alliance with whom they might, even at the last moment, have stopped or confined the war. Now Hitler also disdained Chamberlain's overtures. Britain therefore signed the long-delayed alliance with Poland and urged the Poles to resist Hitler's demands. Yet she sent Poland no assistance. Was Chamberlain ready to sacrifice Poland in a new and bloodier Munich, hoping that in the wreck of Eastern Poland, it might yet be possible to "switch the war"? Throughout the German-Polish war, voices in the British press expressed such hopes.

During that tragic period, when Poland had been broken and the Warsaw radio, not yet silenced, was pleading over the air for British aid, I said to a Soviet diplomat: "This was what you expected. You must be glad that Moscow is not waiting, like that tortured mayor of Warsaw for the promised help from Britain."

"It was worse than that," he answered. "Chamberlain would not mind saving Poland if he could do it by prayer. But he would not have sent even a pious hope to Moscow!"

"We would have been attacked from both Europe and Asia by Germany, Italy, and Japan, helped by Rumania and Poland, while Great Britain and France would have held the Maginot Line and financed Hitler. America would have been Japan's arsenal against us, as she has been against China. By our non-aggression pact we drove wedges between Hitler, Japan, and Hitler's London backers. It was too late to stop the invasion of Poland. Chamberlain didn't even try to; he wanted war at last. But this is a lesser war than they planned, and even if it becomes in the end the great war, we have split the opposition and shall not have to fight the whole world."

Thus the long struggle for peace by the world's democratic forces, for whom Litvinov had been such a brilliant spokesman, ended in failure. The Second World War began.

* Stated in House of Commons in proposing alliance with Poland.

Ten :

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Warsaw as the capital of the Polish state no longer exists. No one knows the whereabouts of the Polish government. The population of Poland have been abandoned by their ill-starred leaders to their fate.

Poland has become a fertile field for any accidental or unexpected contingency that may create a menace for the Soviet Union... The Soviet Government deems it its sacred duty to extend the hand of assistance to its brother Ukrainians and brother Byelo-Russians inhabiting Poland....

In these words Vyacheslav Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, announced on September 17, 1939, first by note to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow and the embassies of all the other countries, and then by radio to the Soviet people and the world in general, that the Red Army was marching into Poland.

Bernard Shaw was one of the first Englishmen to hail the strategy of that Soviet march. While the American press was rather querulously speaking of Stalin as "Hitler's accomplice," Shaw noted in the London *Times* that the Soviet entrance into Eastern Poland was "Hitler's first setback." He added, "Three cheers for Stalin," who, when "Polish resistance has been wiped out," said to the Nazis, "Thus far and no farther."

The British generally saw the significance of that march far sooner than did the Americans. Americans still talk as if Stalin and Hitler jointly and cynically divided the unfortunate Poles. But Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, said in a broadcast on October 1, 1939: "The Soviets have stopped the Nazis in Eastern Poland; I only regret that they are not doing it as our allies." A few weeks later, on October 26, Prime Minister Chamberlain himself rather sourly admitted in the House of Commons that "It had been necessary for the Red Army to occupy part of Poland as protection against Germany."

The larger strategy of that march into Poland and its effect

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upon the second World War will be discussed in a later chapter. Here we will consider the effect of the march not on Europe but on the thirteen million people of the territory into which the Red Army marched.

All correspondents admitted that the Polish Government and its army were broken. "The Polish Government left Warsaw mysteriously early on September 5, making no statement to Warsaw or the nation," wrote Richard Mowrer. "It paused briefly at Kutu on the Rumanian frontier and on September 17 hopped into Rumania. The Supreme chief of the Polish forces, Marshal Smigly-Rydz, hopped too."* In most of Poland, the officers had fled, abandoning their troops. General Vallenius of Finland watched the defeated Poles streaming through Lodz for thirty-six hours and saw not an officer among them.† German bombers were in the sky terrorizing the Polish population. Unparalleled hunger and desolation prevailed.

The chaos that reigned throughout Poland was rapidly becoming civil war in the eastern part of the country. This territory, which Molotov called "Western Ukraine and Byelo-Russia" was inhabited by Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian peasants under Polish landlords. It was not given to Poland by the Versailles Treaty; both Woodrow Wilson and the British Lord Curzon left it outside their "ethnic Poland." The Polish landlords thrust the new Polish State into a war of aggression in 1920 and took the lands. Through the Warsaw government, which they dominated, the landlords treated their peasants more brutally than had the Russian tsar. They withdrew even such rights as the common pasture and the privilege of picking mushrooms and berries in the woods. In an effort to Polonize the territory by force they settled demobilized Polish soldiers along the frontier, often by dispossessing whole villages of natives. For twenty years the League of Nations' reports indicated that Eastern Poland had one of the most brutally handled minority problems anywhere in Europe.

The frictions were complicated by the fact that the cities

* New York *World-Telegram*, September 26.

† New York *Times*, Sept. 16, 1939.

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and trading towns of the region are largely Jewish. Here lay the old tsarist "Pale of Settlement," containing the bulk of Europe's Jews. Not even Hitler treated the Jews more brutally than did the "Poland of the Pans" as the minor nationalities called it, using the Polish term for "lord." "A Jew-child is a future Jew; twist its neck when it is born," read one of the Anti-Semitic posters the Red Army found when it marched into Poland. Frictions between all the minor nationalities had been kept at boiling heat by pogroms.

The pot began to boil over when the Polish State collapsed. Demoralized bands of Polish soldiers killed Jews and Ukrainians. Pro-Nazi Ukrainian terrorist bands killed Poles. Meanwhile the advance forces of the German Army reached Lvov, a Jewish-Ukrainian city on the borders of Rumania, and infested it on three sides. It was at once assumed in Eastern Europe that Lvov would be the capital of a puppet Ukrainian state, which Hitler would use as his base against the U.S.S.R. The Red Army's march was seen in Eastern Europe as a check to this plan of the Nazis, preventing the organization of the East Poland chaos into a Nazi Ukraine.

The arrival of the Red Army was not only unopposed by the population; there are evidences that it was hailed with passionate joy. "Russian troops went into Poland without firing a shot and were seen marching side by side with the retiring Polish troops," said the first Associated Press despatch.* Major William S. Colbern, United States military attaché, met a column of Soviet tanks accompanying Polish troops; one of the Soviet tank commanders told him: "We are against the Germans." Anthony Drexel Biddle, United States Ambassador to Poland, reported that the population accepted the Red Army "as doing a policing job." The Polish commander of the Lvov garrison, who had held out for several days against the German attack, promptly surrendered to the Red Army when it approached on the fourth side of the city. He stated: "There is no Polish government left to give me orders, and I have received no orders to fight the Bolsheviks." That there was some opposition, but that it was only from small bands, is shown by the

* Sept. 18 from Cernauti; also includes Colbern's statement.

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casualty figures later released by the Red Army: 737 dead and 1862 wounded.

I had personally known that those peasants of Eastern Poland had longed for the coming of the Red Army for twenty years. When I went to Poland in 1921 with the American Friends' Service Committee, I saw their wretched villages, sunk in ancient swamps and recent barbed-wire entanglements from the first World War. Around them rose slopes of good soil, high and healthy; they belonged to absentee landlords who used them for occasional hunting parties. Our Friends' Service gave quinine endlessly to cure malaria in those villages, but we knew it could never be stamped out until the peasants could move to the landlords' land. We heard them say: "When the Russians come back"... We knew they were waiting.

Ukrainian girls hung flowers on the tanks of the arriving Red Army. Families sobbed on the necks of relatives they had not seen for years. Even before the army arrived, the local peasants often held meetings, set up local governments, and rounded up straggling Polish soldiers in the woods. When these were delivered to the Red Army, they were usually disarmed and sent home. Officers and special police troops were more apt to be sent somewhere into the distant interior of the U.S.S.R., lest they organize attacks against the new rule.

Five weeks after the Red Army's arrival, general elections were held of that type looked at so skeptically by Anglo-Saxons and taken so naturally in Eastern Europe, in which a single ticket was put up and the population mobilized to greet it. They turned out with enthusiasm to the number of more than nine-tenths of the electorate. The following week the National Assembly of Western Byelo-Russia and the National Assembly of Western Ukraine met and voted to confiscate the land of the big landlords, to nationalize banks and large-scale industries, and to join the Soviet Union. Despite the skepticism that naturally attends results reached in the presence of armed forces, few people who know the racial composition of Eastern Poland doubted that the population had resented the rule of Warsaw and felt "liberated" when the Red Army came. British governmental spokesmen immediately made it plain that their future claims for the restoration of Poland did not necessarily include

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that part into which the Red Army had come. Even the Polish Government-in-Exile did not venture to declare the Red Army's march an act of war.

In simple oratory the worker and peasant deputies to the new National Assemblies told of their tortured past and of their happiness when the Red Army arrived. Women told how in former days young boys had been held on anthills by landlords' agents in order to break the spirit of rebellion, how a mother picking up fuel in the woods to heat water for a newborn baby had been caught by the lord's forester, beaten, and afterward turned over to the attack of fierce dogs. It was a gruesome account of medieval conditions.

Deputies from Grodno told how the Jewish and Byelo-Russian workers of the city had organized their own militia before the Red Army came and had rushed out and helped build a bridge for it into the city under the fire of Polish officers. "As soon as the Red Army came," said a carpenter from Bialystok, "we asked them to set up Soviet power for us. But they told us: 'Soviet power is the power of the people. Organize it yourselves, for now you are the bosses of your lives'." A simple peasant women deputy said: "Let the priests pray to God for Paradise, but for us the daylight is already come; the bright sun is come from the East." Letters telling a similar story reached America from Jews in the occupied regions. They especially commented on their rescue from death, for they had been threatened both by German bombing and by anti-Semitic bands of Poles. "If the Red Army had been a day later, not a Jew in our town would have been left alive," wrote a man from Grodno. Other letters marvelled at the new equality. "To the Bolsheviks everyone is equal; there is no difference between Gentile and Jew."

There was a grimmer side to the story. Poles in fairly large numbers were deported to various places in the Soviet Union. Letters received by their relatives in Europe and America showed that they were scattered all over the U.S.S.R.; the sending of the letters also indicated that they were not under surveillance but merely deported away from the border district. The Soviet authorities claimed that former Polish officers and military colonists had done considerable sabotage and kept the

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people disturbed by rumors of imminent invasions by Rumanian and British troops. After the conclusion of the Soviet-Polish alliance against Hitlerite Germany, these Poles rapidly joined the Polish Legion under the Red Army High Command. Most of them then stated that they fully understood the necessity of the Red Army's march into Poland.

Tens of thousands of Jewish refugees were also shipped into the interior of the U.S.S.R. in what seems to have been a rough and inefficient manner, causing many complaints to go abroad. Theirs was a somewhat different case. They were people without homes or jobs in the new territories. They had fled thither to escape from Hitler and were clogging the housing facilities of cities and towns along the Soviet border. They were given about nine months to find jobs; failing this, at a moment when the Nazi menace was growing, they were deported to other areas where jobs were available. When Hitler's forces later marched into Lvov and all the surrounding territories, these deportees may have been glad that they had been shipped away.

Social and educational workers of high caliber were sent from Moscow, the Ukraine, and Byelo-Russia to help organize the new territories. One of my Moscow friends, the chief of the Foreign Literature Section of the State Publishing House, spent some months in Lvov contacting penniless Polish authors and arranging to publish their works. Another, Alexander Dovzhenko, the famous Ukrainian author and motion-picture director who produced the well-known film "Shors," went to the new territories to shoot newsreels and also as one of the thousands of people commissioned by the Soviet Ukrainian government to organize the political life of the new lands.

Entering with the Red Army, Dovzhenko was just in time to save the Ukrainian priest and teacher in one village from being buried alive by Polish special police; the victims had been tied with barbed wire for the burial. Another village had been burned by retreating special police; there was left only ashes, the moaning of cattle, and the weeping of children. Dovzhenko quieted them, and the peasants began coming back from the woods where they were hiding. Finding the village without food, Dovzhenko then went to the nearby estate

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of Graf Landskoronsky and ordered the farm hands to organize food distribution for the surrounding villages from the stores of grain they had kept there for cattle.

One of Dovzhenko's chief jobs as a "political worker" was to answer all kinds of questions about the U.S.S.R. Some of the questions were very funny. "Do people kiss in your country? Are you allowed to use lipstick?" One marriage broker, learning that the Soviets had civil marriage registration instead of parish registration, wanted to know: "How do you start a marriage registration bureau? Can I open one?"

More serious questions concerned the land, the schools, religion, the question of nationalities. "Is knowledge really free? Are there schools for all?" was a frequent demand. In the rural regions the peasants asked many questions about religion. They had been accustomed to a regime that persecuted the Ukrainian Church, and they had heard that the Bolsheviki were against all churches. Dovzhenko told me a typical conversation.

"Comrade, can we pray to God?"

"Of course."

"How and in what church?"

"Wherever you like."

" 'Thank you,' they would say, making a deep obeisance and trying to kiss your hand. It was terrible to be reminded how humble the peasant had been made to be towards all officials."

Dovzhenko laughed when I asked him about the attitude of the Ukrainian priests. "It is probably the first place where priests welcomed the Bolsheviki," he said. Ukrainian priests have for centuries been the center of the Ukrainian movement for national freedom. Under the Poles they were constantly being arrested for such crimes as "false registry of names," which meant that they registered children in the Ukrainian language instead of in Polish. They looked upon the coming of the Red Army as the uniting of the Ukrainian people, who had been separated for centuries. When the elections to the Supreme Soviet were held on Sunday, after six months of Bolshevik rule, the peasants went first to church and then to the polls. Often they came from the church in procession with the

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priest leading the way and casting the first vote.

Within six months after the coming of the Red Army, oil fields in Western Ukraine that had been idle for years were back in production. The unemployed in Lvov were getting work at the rate of one or two hundred a day. A year after the occupation, Western Ukraine reported that 978 industrial plants that had been idle had been reopened, and 500 new ones had been built. Hundreds of new school buildings were constructed and hundreds of hospitals. An invasion of music followed the Red Army invasion. Led by opera artists of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Byelo-Russia, the new territories rapidly acquired bands, orchestras, musical schools, and theaters of their own.

They had less than two years' glimpse of their new national equality and progress. In those two years they gained a hope and an organization which strikes today at the German line in Eastern Europe in the fury of a people's war. There is no fury greater than that of people who, after centuries of oppression, have glimpsed freedom for a little while.

Eleven:

Building the Buffer Belt

The march of the Red Army into Poland had immediate repercussions in all the states along the Soviets' European border. The first reaction seems to have been one of amazement tempered by relief. Correspondents from Hungary and Rutenia all noted this amazement; they said that "respect for Russia had been greatly increased,"* and that there was no question that the peasants preferred Russians to Germans along their border. In Rumania it was noted that the march of the Red Army had probably prevented violent Nazi uprisings intended to turn that country over to the German troops.

A second effect of the march was the swift intensification of class cleavage in all these states. All of them had dictator governments, which had kept the people uninformed about the Soviet Union. But nothing could stop the news that the peasants of East Poland, with Soviet approval, were taking the landlords' land. This stirred new hopes among the poor and landless rural populations and also, of course, increased the anti-Soviet attitude of the upper classes. A secret delegation from Lithuanian ruling circles went to Berlin to invite Hitler's direct intervention.† The mere suspicion of its purpose caused such outcry among the Lithuanian people that it was repudiated by the Lithuanian government, especially as Hitler was not yet ready to send troops.

Moscow's next moves were directed towards strengthening her European frontier by military alliances with neighboring Baltic States. The way was prepared by the Soviet refusal of the boundary line which Hitler first offered in Poland, and which would have given to the Soviets territory in "ethnic Poland" as far as Warsaw. This refusal not only preserved Soviet neutrality in the eyes of Britain but helped convince East European powers that the Soviets were not only strong but just.

* AP dispatch, Sept. 22. See also Chapter XIII.

† Told to me in Lithuania. Later stated by Hitler in his speech declaring war against U.S.S.R.

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Next the Soviets presented Lithuania with her ancient capital Vilno, seized twenty years earlier by the Poles. It was an important gift, being twice the size of the present capital Kaunas; its 550,000 population increased Lithuania's total population by 20 percent. Molotov later stated that it was not given because Vilno had a Lithuanian population; after twenty years of Polish domination, most of Vilno's inhabitants were Poles and Jews. "The Soviet Government took into consideration... the historic past and... the national aspirations of the Lithuanian people." In other words the gift was made, not for the sake of Vilno, which didn't particularly want to be transferred, but for the psychological effect on the Lithuanians.

Having prepared for friendly intercourse by these actions, the Soviets next combined invitation with pressure. They seized the incident of the escape of an interned Polish submarine from an Estonian port and the subsequent torpedoing of a Soviet ship to invite the Estonian Foreign Minister to Moscow to discuss a mutual alliance. He went and signed on the dotted line. Similar invitations were issued to Latvia and Lithuania with similar results. By October 10, 1939, less than a month after the Red Army marched into Poland, these three Baltic States, which had always been highways for a military invasion of the Soviet Union, had military alliances with the U.S.S.R.

"Every day it becomes clearer that Russia is constructing a great defense barrier from the Baltic to the Black Sea," wrote an American commentator.* Most of the British and American press greeted these first Baltic moves of the U.S.S.R. with the outcry of denunciation that had been habitual in mentioning Soviet moves. The Baltic governments themselves, after the first plunge, seem to have found the swimming not too chilly. They noted realistically that they formerly had to be acceptable to the British or Germans to get loans or commerce, and now they had to be acceptable to the Soviets. They added that the Soviets "could have demanded anything up to annexation and complete Sovietization of their countries and neither Germany

* Walter Lippmann, New York *Herald-Tribune*, Oct. 10, 1939.

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nor the Allies could have stopped it.”* Their internal organization was no more affected by the new alliance than the governments in South America are affected by the acquisition of naval bases by the United States. The countries were not even required to join in the defense of the U.S.S.R. unless the attack upon it came directly across their territory. Baltic diplomats and press therefore commented on the shrewdness and reasonableness of Moscow and on the expected trade advantages; they much resented the term “vassal” applied to them by the Anglo-American press.

A powerful chain of naval bases, originally constructed by Peter the Great, thus came under Soviet control. Fully as important as the naval bases was the removal of about half a million Germans from the Baltic States. Some of them had been in the Baltic for centuries, but most of them had come from the Polish Corridor when it was taken from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. All of them were highly conscious of themselves as a superior race. They formed the upper class in the Baltic States. For centuries they had been the outpost of German imperialism eastward; they owned the big estates and dominated the industries. At the time of the Russian revolution, much of the native population sided with the Bolsheviks; it was the Baltic Germans who overthrew the local Red governments, calling the troops of the Kaiser to their aid. The removal of these Baltic Germans by Soviet pressure on Hitler scattered what was, for the U.S.S.R., the most dangerous Nazi Fifth Column anywhere in Europe. Baltic newspapers expressed regret mingled with pleasure at their going, and remarked that it gave the natives a chance at the better-paid jobs.

Having secured herself against surprise attack via the southern Baltic by shrewd timing, with practically no effort, Moscow next approached Finland, which controls the gateway from the north. Finland was in a position to nullify most of the previous gains, for the Finnish shores control for a hundred miles the sea approach to Leningrad, while the Finnish frontier was only twenty miles from that city – within gunshot range. During the wars of intervention from 1918 through 1921 Finland

* Gedye, *New York Times*, Oct. 11, 1939.

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had been the country through which was launched the first and also the last attack on the U.S.S.R. "The best approach to Petrograd is from the Baltic and the shortest and easiest route is through Finland... Finland is the key to Petrograd, and Petrograd is the key to Moscow," said the London *Times*, promoting the intervention of those days.

Finland – or rather the Finnish ruling circles and especially Baron Karl von Mannerheim – had a long history of conflict with the Soviets. There are two Finlands. Class lines here have always been unusually bitter, being accentuated by race. The upper class consists of descendants of Swedes who once ruled the land, and who, like the Germans of the southern Baltic States, disdained until recently even to speak the language of the natives. The common people are an Asiatic race who centuries ago became the football of wars between the Swedish and Russian Empires. The Finnish common people had a hunger for democracy as strong as any in the world. They were the first people in the world to elect a parliament with a Socialist majority. This was at the 1916 elections, and was a wartime protest against the Russian tsar.

Finnish independence was a gift from the Bolshevik revolution. Any school teacher in present-day Finland would lose her job if she mentioned this incontrovertible historic fact. When Kerensky came to power, Finland applied for independence. The Kerensky government refused. Neither Britain, France, America, nor any foreign power approved of Finland's independence in those days. Only the Bolsheviks approved. On motion of Josef Stalin, who said that "since the Finnish people through their representatives definitely demand that their independence be recognized, the proletarian state... cannot but meet the demand of the people of Finland," Finland's independence was confirmed by Soviet Russia on January 4, 1918.

This early democratically elected Finland was quickly suppressed. Baron Karl von Mannerheim, a tsarist general, called in German troops to overthrow the government. After this victory he won the title "Butcher" by his slaughter of some 40,000 of the Finnish working class and put so many more of them in concentration camps that the industries couldn't run for want of workers. He dominated the country through his Civil

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Guards, a privately organized army with government subsidy, the first army of the fascist type in Europe. From that time on, despite many bitter struggles, Finland never got back its democracy. More than half of the farmers possessed a total of less than four per cent of the farm land. Trade-union membership, which in 1919 was 161,000, was only 90,000 in 1939. Finland's Constitution made the President independent of the Diet, with the right to dissolve it, veto its decisions, and promulgate legislation without the Diet. Citizens' rights might be restricted "in time of war or under any other circumstances." Whatever democracy the Constitution permitted was nullified by the Civil Guard.

What concerned the Soviet Union was not Finland's internal organization, but the fact that for twenty years the ruling class of Finland was a center of international actions against the Soviets. Helsinki vied with Riga as chief source of anti-Soviet forged documents and the chief entry port for spies bound for the U.S.S.R. Armaments were supplied to Finland by any nation that felt in an anti-Soviet mood. In the early days the Mannerheim Line was built under British direction; it was a system of offensive-defensive forts well calculated to shield a large force attacking Leningrad. Later Finland's airdromes were built by the Nazis who by that time had become the center of the anti-Soviet forces. Built to accommodate 2000 planes, while Finland had 150, they were clearly planned as a base for one of the major powers. Baron Mannerheim represented Finland in 1935 at the East Prussia meeting called by Goering to discuss joint plans against the U.S.S.R.*

Finland was therefore known to the Soviet leaders as the most hostile of all the Baltic States. The others had signed up easily; it was known that an alliance with Finland would be the hardest to get. But Moscow had something to offer. The Anglo-

* Rominten meeting in East Prussia reported in London *Times* Oct. 15, 1935. Besides Goering for Germany, Mannerheim for Finland, there were Price Radziwill for Poland and Premier Goemboes for Hungary. Air armaments, naval and military plans were exchanged and Finland's strategic position for naval operations was discussed.

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German war was ruining Finland's foreign trade and causing a severe depression; Finland wanted trade with the Soviets and the use of the Murmansk Railway for access to the outer world.*

On October 5th, 1939, having signed up the rest of the Eastern Baltic, the Soviet government invited the Finnish government to send a plenipotentiary to Moscow to discuss "pending questions." The result was somewhat startling. The Finnish government, before replying, declared partial mobilization, sent large armed forces to the frontier, closed the stock exchange until further notice, requested women and children to evacuate Helsinki, and appealed to America for "sympathy and moral support." The Moscow press expressed ironic irritation over what was considered a government-inspired panic before the U.S.S.R. had even presented demands.

The Soviet proposals thus heralded did not seem especially alarming when finally made to the Finnish delegation, which arrived in Moscow October 11th under chairmanship of M. Paasikivi, an experienced diplomat. Moscow first proposed an alliance, such as she had with the other Baltic States, but almost at once dropped the proposal in view of Finland's clear unwillingness. The Soviets next proposed that both sides agree not to join a military coalition against the other and that certain exchanges of territory be made for the protection of Leningrad. The Soviets wanted the frontier moved back far enough to take Leningrad out of gunshot from Finland; they did not ask, as some have thought, for the Mannerheim Line. They also wanted some small islands that covered Leningrad's sea approach. They offered in return twice as much equally good but less strategic land; later they raised the offer. They also asked a thirty-year lease of Hangoe, or some other point at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, as a naval base.

Premier Cajander of Finland almost at once (October 13) broadcast a statement that the Soviet demands did not affect the integrity of Finland. A month later, after the U.S.S.R. had made several concessions, the Finnish government decided that the demands did affect Finland's integrity and broke off

* Petsamo, Finland's Arctic port, has no railroad.

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negotiations November 13 with the cryptic remark that circumstances would decide when and by whom they would be renewed. What had happened to make the Finnish government change its mind about the nature of the proposals and finally turn them down?

A Swedo-Finnish woman of the upper classes whom I met in Rome thought she knew what had happened. She despised Bolsheviks, Russians generally, and also lower-class Finns as Asiatics. But she reserved her real hate – the kind of hate one has for an equal – for the Finnish Prime Minister and for Prime Minister Chamberlain and President Roosevelt. She thought that “our Paasikivi was a clever man who knows how to handle Russians,” and that he had secured in Moscow “a very smart bargain.” He had made the Russians increase their offer of territory until Finland stood to get nearly three to one by the trade. He had got the Russians to agree that the Hangoe naval base should be held not for thirty years but only for the duration of the Anglo-German war, after which it would come back to Finland “fully equipped.”

“Not a bad bargain at all,” she said, “but Erkkö was stubborn, and he seems to have had promises from America and Britain. They got us into this and we are ruined now.”

Some day when the archives of nations are opened, we may know what really happened in that Soviet-Finnish war. The day after negotiations broke down, diplomatic quarters in Washington were saying, according to the *New York Times*, that the expectation of loans from America “might have influenced Finland into suspending negotiations.” It is clear at least that the war was part of a larger setup, and can be understood only in relation to the whole European conflict then going on. That was the time of the “phony war” on the Western front, when neither Chamberlain, Daladier, nor Hitler really wanted to fight. Hitler was making “peace offensives.” Chamberlain was making “alliances” with states in Eastern Europe, trying to throw the war around Germany via Turkey in the south and the Scandinavian countries in the north. He wanted to get the war into Eastern Europe for three good reasons: to cut Germany’s supply line, to get an easier approach than the deadly Westwall offered, and most important of all, to have the war

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where it could be thrown in either direction, against Germany or the U.S.S.R.

In the opinion of many it was the “wrong war” that had started. Both the American and British press were full of desires to “switch the war.”* “There is no doubt that there are powerful classes both in France and in Britain which would be more interested in a war against Bolshevik Russia than in a war against Nazi Germany,” wrote Lloyd George.† Sweden’s Foreign Minister Guenther spilled part of the beans after the Soviet-Finnish War was over in his official explanation on March 17 of what Sweden’s position had been. “The idea of coming to the aid of Finland opened up new vistas to the Allied powers. The deadlock on the Western front was not popular and the newspapers of France spoke of the hunt for new battlefields.”

Moscow certainly thought that the Finnish cabinet leaders were acting, not under instructions from the Finnish Parliament, but under secret pressures from America and Britain. The Finnish Parliament was not summoned until after the war began; Finnish newspapers that suggested that the Soviet proposals offered a basis for negotiation were suppressed. The Soviet leaders believed the Finnish cabinet intended to keep the border boiling with incidents during the winter, which would lead up to large-scale intervention by stronger powers in the spring.

In any event, when the first shooting incident occurred – an alleged shooting by Finnish artillery across the border resulting in Red Army casualties – the Soviets, after a disregard-

* D. N. Pritt, in *Must the War Spread* (pp. 173-185) gives eighteen quotations from papers like the *London Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* and others, and almost as many from the American press, showing that a widespread press campaign alluded to the U.S.S.R. as “the ultimate enemy... the nightmare behind the nightmare” and tried to turn the war into a joint attack by all of Europe, including Hitler, against the U.S.S.R. This campaign began two months before the Soviet invasion of Finland and continued until the accession to power of Winston Churchill, two months after the close of the Soviet-Finnish War.

† United Feature Syndicate, Feb. 13, 1940.

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ed protest, ordered their troops to march on November 30, 1939. Finland declared war and appealed for foreign help. President Roosevelt declared a "moral embargo" against the Soviets; the League of Nations held a special session to expel the offender. For the rest of the winter the Anglo-German war was out of the picture. The real European war had moved to Finland, as judged both by government attention and by the press. The storm of denunciation and the campaign of lying which for three months filled the American and British press was unprecedented in our history.

The press of the U.S.S.R. gave the conflict far less attention. They treated it, not as a large-scale war, but as a military operation by the Leningrad Military District for the defense of Leningrad, on much the same level as the Soviet press had previously treated two border conflicts in the Far East with Japan. In neither case was the Red Army as a whole engaged. The armed forces of the Leningrad district carried the action through.

The military campaign had four distinct phases. The objective of the first phase was to move the border back from Leningrad and to isolate Finland so that the whole World War could not immediately pour through the northern gateway against the U.S.S.R. This objective was attained in three weeks. The Red Army's first offensive pushed the land frontier forty miles back from Leningrad and occupied the islands that controlled the sea approach. Simultaneously the seizure of Petsamo, Finland's Arctic port, made impossible the importation of large forces by sea. The coldest Arctic winter for decades ushered in the second period of relative passivity, during which advances were consolidated and communication lines strengthened. The Soviet forces sustained some local reverses which the American press exaggerated into major defeats. The war's third phase began with the first letup of winter about January 13, 1940. It was a systematic air bombardment of the entire Finnish military establishment: war industries, railways, ports, airdromes, and fortresses. The negligible number of civilian casualties – Finland officially reported only 640 civilian deaths from air bombing during the whole war – indicates considerable discrimination in this bombardment.

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The fourth phase of the war began with the launching of an attack on the main Mannerheim Line on February 11. This system of fortifications was "equal to and in some respects stronger than the Maginot Line or the Westwall."* It was cracked in one month by a carefully considered attack. Stupendous artillery pounding dislodged the earth around the fortifications and threw their guns out of line while breaking the nerve of the defenders by unbearable shaking; then the line was assaulted. It was the first time in military history that a line of such strength had been taken by assault; its cracking was regarded as "the most significant feat since the first World War."† Finnish resistance collapsed with the breaking of the line. Hostilities ceased March 12 with the signing of a peace treaty in Moscow. Two hours before the armistice deadline the city of Viborg fell before the last onslaught of the Red Army.

Every effort was made by the British and French governments to prevent the signing of peace between Finland and the U.S.S.R. Britain refused to transmit the preliminary approaches; Finland then asked Sweden to act as intermediary. During the negotiations Daladier put pressure on Finland, informing her that an Anglo-French expeditionary force was ready to sail and that if Finland refused to ask for it, the Allies would "not be able to assume any responsibility for Finland's territorial status," i.e. existence, at the close of the general European war. Both Chamberlain and Daladier high-pressured the Scandinavian countries, demanding that they permit the passage of troops to the Finnish front. (Chamberlain later admitted that this was expected to involve Sweden in war.‡) On March 10 Chamberlain intimated in the House of Commons that ways were being considered to force Sweden's neutrality in order to compel the continuance of the Finnish war. "London is buzz-

* James Aldrich, *New York Times*, March 14, 1940.

† Same, March 16, 1940.

‡ In his speech on March 19, when he said that it had been planned to assign 50,000 of the 100,000 troops to help Sweden against the German attack which the entrance of the troops might provoke.

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ing with rumors of war on a much wider front and perhaps war with Russia,” cabled the *New York Times* correspondent on March 11, 1940. The buzzing came too late. The attempt to shift the European war into Finland and create a world line-up against the U.S.S.R. broke on Sweden’s unwillingness to be drawn into the conflict and on General Mannerheim’s incorrect estimate of Soviet strength. Mannerheim had told the Anglo-French Allies that he would not need reinforcements until May, and by that time Chamberlain expected to be able to force Sweden’s agreement. Neither the Finns nor the British dreamed that the Mannerheim Line could be cracked by a winter campaign. Two months before the time set by Mannerheim for the Anglo-French reinforcements, the war was over. The Red Army had cracked the Mannerheim Line and the Finns had asked for peace.

In the peace terms the Soviet Union exacted from Finland considerably more territory adjacent to Leningrad than had originally been asked. The Mannerheim Line was taken and turned in reverse. The naval base at Hangoe was secured. But the Soviets returned Petsamo and the nickel mines near it, which they had captured. They asked no indemnities, but agreed on a trade treaty whereby they supplied Finland with food. As terms go these were not excessive. Some people think today that the Soviets did not take enough. Petsamo today is in the hands of Nazi Germany, Finland’s perennial ally; the Germans use it as a submarine base against Britain as they did in the first World War.

Sir Stafford Cripps, British Ambassador to Moscow, thinks that the terms might well have been stiffer. As I sat in his embassy at tea in late 1940 he told me that all the Soviet annexations from Finland to Bessarabia had been necessary strategic moves against the coming attack by Hitler. He added: “The Soviets may be sorry some day that they didn’t take more of Finland when they could.”

Sir Stafford was wrong. Stalin’s sense of timing is better than Sir Stafford’s. The Soviets had to make peace when they did. Finland, it is true, was broken; she could not have stopped a Soviet march to her uttermost border. But behind Finland lay Sweden and the French and British troops. A march of the Red

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Army toward the Swedish border might well have melted Sweden's unwillingness to permit the passage of the Anglo-French armies. British, French, Swedish, and Norwegian troops would have brought the world war to the Soviet borders. The world front that today crystallizes against Hitler would have crystallized a year earlier against the U.S.S.R.

So Moscow was well advised in that swift peace signing. Besides, it was well to be done. No decent person, I think, can feel happy about the Soviet- Finnish War. The Soviet people, I know, were never happy about it, nor were their leaders. For Finland it shattered an already depression-cracked economy and plunged the people into famine. For the Soviet Union it shattered a hard-won reputation as a nonaggressive country and spread dismay among thousands of former friends throughout the world.

But I think that if a hostile country were located in the middle of Long Island, which refused to agree with the U. S. Government on a joint continent defense, but set up against Manhattan fortifications provided by Germans and Japanese, the U. S. Army would attack it even more quickly than the Russians did. Finland is as near to Leningrad as the middle of Long Island is to Manhattan. A German panzer column, sheltered in the excellent offensive-defensive system of the Mannerheim Line, could have reached the heart of Leningrad in half an hour. When the great war finally came, Leningrad had space – and space means time – to organize defense.

Besides, the Soviet-Finnish war had victories outside Finland. The sequence of Soviet acts from the march into Poland to the peace treaty with Finland convinced the states of Eastern Europe that the U.S.S.R. was strong and knew what she wanted. She was not like Hitler, making and breaking promises and eternally grabbing more. But she wanted definite things and gave her reasons and was serious about them to the point of war. One of the things she obviously wanted was a broad buffer belt from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

Rumania knew then that the time had come to give back Bessarabia, which she had seized from the young Soviet power in the days of its weakness in 1918. The population was not Rumanian but was allied to the Moldavians in the nearby Sovi-

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et Ukraine; it had risen against Rumanian overlordship 153 times in different places in six years. The U.S.S.R. had never recognized the validity of the seizure, but had never made it a cause of war. Rumanian boyars, Bessarabian peasants, and the Soviet people all knew that some day the Soviets would take that country back. The Soviets were strong now; they had waited twenty-two years for the right moment. When Hitler was occupied with France, Moscow asked Rumania for Bessarabia and got it without war.

So Marshal Timoshenko, commander-in-chief of the Soviet forces, came home to the Bessarabian village where he was born. He embraced his brother, who was still a poverty-stricken peasant, as the parents of both had been. The villagers made festival and stared at this son of theirs who, in twenty-two years while time stood still in the village, had become a Marshal of the great U.S.S.R. Throughout Bessarabia garlands were laid on the graves of those thousands of long-tortured people who through all the seemingly hopeless revolts had believed in this hour. Trembling old men, receiving for their last years their measured bit of land from great estates, fell down to embrace their soil. Soviet ships sailed up the Danube, the northern branch of whose delta became the Soviet frontier.

The long buffer belt across Eastern Europe was completed – from Hangoe on the Gulf of Finland to the Danube mouth on the Black Sea – as Hitler, from his ravaging of Western Europe, turned East.

Twelve:

The Baltic Goes Soviet

I had the tremendous luck to arrive in Lithuania in July, 1940, just after the Red Army marched in. I stopped in the capital, Kaunas, on my way to Moscow, expecting to spend a day. The day grew to a week, the week to a month. Lithuania had become important, perhaps even decisive for future world history. The Soviet Union was building in the Baltic States its border defense against the war that was shaking Europe.

It was all being done so deftly that nine-tenths of the Lithuanians I talked to thought – and rightly – that they were doing it themselves. Never in any land – in Spain, in Russia, or in China – have I seen a whole people so swiftly come alive. Day and night, for weeks, singing did not cease in the streets of Kaunas. A year later, when I met Lithuanians in Chicago, I was surprised to find that they were considered, and seemed to be, a rather stolid people. They had been anything but stolid in the Lithuania I knew.

A sovereign state was changing from capitalism to socialism quite constitutionally without destruction of life or property. The thing had never happened before. Everything was so orderly, even so decorous, that it was hard to think of it as revolution. The talk was all of trade-unions, of elections, of protecting public properties. What could be more sedate than that? Yet a new speed had hit this quiet land, and in a few short weeks it was traveling into the first stages of socialism: nationalizing of land, of banks and industries, workers' control, Soviets.

"The masses are moving," said one of the Lithuanian progressive intellectuals, "and no one knows how far they will go." The odd thing about it is that that was really the way it felt in Lithuania – not like an occupation by an army, or the seizure of territory, but like the release of forces among the common people, who rapidly began to organize. It was only when it was over, and Lithuania had entered the Soviet Union, that I – and the people with whom I talked in Kaunas – could see that it had been planned by Moscow, and accomplished through the

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free choice of the Baltic people, which Moscow knew how to arouse.

It seems that President Justas Paletskis must have known it from the first. During the Lithuanian elections, I remarked to the Chief of the Telegraph Agency that many of the Kaunas intellectuals were dissatisfied by what seemed to them unnecessary speed. They wanted an election after the American or British manner, with plenty of time to organize political parties. Some of them felt that they were being railroaded by the speed with which the new trade-unions and peasant meetings put up tickets and swept into an unopposed campaign.

"A lot of us think it's a bit too speedy," answered the Chief of the Telegraph Agency. "Paletskis, I understand, wanted six months to take Lithuania into the Soviet Union, but Molotov said there wasn't time."

At once the friend accompanying me – she was one of those hesitant intellectuals – spoke up. "You mean that otherwise Hitler would get us? Then let the Russians take us quick."

Up at the foreign embassies they spoke of it as the "death of Lithuania." But even they admitted that it was no simple annexation, that something among the Lithuanian people themselves was going on. In fact this disturbed them more than outright violence. A man at the American Legation said to me, "It wouldn't have been so bad if the Red Army had merely seized the country and established a protectorate the way the Germans do. But they've started something going among the lower classes that is undermining the whole social structure. You should see my janitor!"

I didn't see his janitor, but I saw tens of thousands like him, workers and peasants who were experiencing the thrill of unwonted power. For a month I lived and moved among the common people of the Baltic, travelling hundreds of miles unhindered and unchaperoned. Among farmers and workers, fishermen and intellectuals, I saw the forces that the coming of the Red Army unleashed. It was an amazing revelation of the possibility of combining shrewd political planning with a people's open choice.

The background may be briefly summarized. Treaties of

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mutual assistance had been concluded the previous October* with the three Baltic States – Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – permitting the U.S.S.R. to establish naval bases along their coasts and to send there a mutually agreed number of Soviet troops. The governments of these states, however, were still in the hands of semi-fascist dictatorships, somewhat pro-Nazi, and at any rate anti-Soviet. Hundreds of Baltic workers were arrested for merely speaking to Red Army men. In Vilno, which the U.S.S.R. gave to Lithuania, the Smetona government staged a pogrom against all those who had previously welcomed the Red Army. When Kaunas workers marched to the Soviet legation to thank them for the gift of Vilno, they were beaten up in front of the legation by the Kaunas police.

Despite these occasions for friction, the treaties of alliance, which both sides had declared satisfactory, might have lasted undisturbed under conditions of relative peace. No such conditions of peace were granted. Hitler's armies, after a winter of quiet, plunged into Norway, Holland, Belgium, France. All Europe trembled with the shock. Then Hitler signed the armistice with France, and immediately began moving troops eastward. Pro-Nazi groups stirred in the Baltic States. Anti-Soviet incidents occurred; it was claimed by Moscow that Red Army men were kidnapped, tortured, and killed with the connivance of the Lithuanian secret police. Using these incidents as a ground, the Soviet government presented an ultimatum, demanding the formation of a government that "would fulfil the treaty of mutual assistance" and asking the right, in view of the increasingly disturbed conditions in Europe, to send a much larger armed force into the Baltic States. The ultimatum was accepted; on June 15 – technically as allies and in agreement with the Baltic governments – considerable forces of the Red Army marched in.

"Stalin beat Hitler into the Baltic States by about twenty-four hours" was the considered judgment of an American in Vilno who had been a press correspondent in Eastern Europe for more than ten years.

Many Lithuanians told me that they agreed with him.

* See preceding chapter.

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Among the reasons they gave was the fact that a large group of high Nazi officials had arrived some days earlier in one of the leading hotels of Kaunas, in connection with a grand "Sport Festival" of German sport clubs who were coming both from Germany and from all parts of the Baltic to convene in Kaunas during the coming week end. In the existing international situation, the convoking of all these athletic young Germans looked suspiciously like preparations for a *coup d'état*. President Smetona of Lithuania and the chief of his secret police, suspected of pro-Nazi plotting, fled to Germany as the Red Army – presumably an Ally – arrived.

The march was totally different from the modest entry of a few troops for naval bases that had occurred the previous autumn. The Red troops came swift and dusty as if hastening to battle; they posted men at the Kaunas railway station, as if war had arrived. But Hitler was not ready for a showdown, so Berlin hastily denied that any friction had been created by the Red Army's march into the Baltic States. Ralph Barnes, Berlin correspondent for the New York *Herald-Tribune*, was expelled from Germany for sending a story implying friction. A year later, in his declaration of war against the U.S.S.R., Hitler admitted that he had been greatly annoyed, as he had always considered Lithuania part of the sphere of "German political interests."

The most applauded folk in all Lithuania during my visit were the Red Army boys. At concerts, dances, trade-union meetings, I heard them mentioned scores of times and never without cheers. In the earlier weeks they were not yet "our army," for Lithuania had not yet become Soviet. They were cheered as "our great ally." They won the envy of the Lithuanian soldiers by their superior equipment; yet they treated them in all respects as equals, exchanging concerts, dances, and similar courtesies. They amazed the peasant by their scrupulous consideration of his property, even to the last fence post. They startled the intellectuals by their culture and knowledge of world affairs. The factory workers were with them from the first.

The Red Army men were not merely allies. They were the bearers of a new idea. International propriety forbade them to preach the idea in words, but they proclaimed it by their acts.

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A peasant told me: "The Red Army tanks were coming through our village, and there was a hen with a brood of chickens on the road. The tanks stopped and a soldier got out and drove off the chickens so that the tanks could go on. Our own Lithuanian soldiers are not as careful of the peasants' property as that." Peasant children were soon shouting with delight as they were given joy rides in the Red Army's trucks. Workers in Siauliai told me that an aged worker, bedridden from arthritis and given up by the local doctors because he was too poor to pay, had received medical help from a Red Army surgeon who was brought to him by one of the local Siauliai Communists.

An American relief worker who spent six months in Vilno told me: "In all these months I have not heard of a drunken Red Army soldier or of any scandal with women. Any army in the world – no, any group of cultured gentlemen in the world – might be proud of the record they have made." Old-time Lithuanians said: "We have seen in our lives three armies – the old tsar's army, the German army of occupation during the first World War, and now these Soviet troops. This is by far the most cultured army we have ever known." – As boosters for the Soviet Union's reputation, the Red Army did an excellent job.

The coming of the Red Army and the flight of President Smetona released forces among the working class, the peasants, and the progressive intellectuals that had been suppressed for fourteen years. A thousand political prisoners were almost at once let out of prison; a large part of them were Communists. Most of them had close contacts with the factories. With their encouragement and leadership the workers organized. Within a week after the flight of Smetona, the first of the big popular demonstrations took place. Tens of thousands of workers marched through the streets of Kaunas demanding the legalization of the Communist Party and secured it. All of the opposition parties had been suppressed by the Smetona dictatorship, but the Communist Party had preserved itself through years of illegality; it was the only organized party to emerge.

The new government was progressive, but by no means Communist. By Smetona's flight, Prime Minister Merkys became president, appointed Justas Paletskis, a brilliant progres-

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sive journalist, as prime minister, and shortly thereafter resigned. Thus Paletskis became president, and appointed a cabinet of well-known intellectuals. Some of them had held cabinet posts in the democratic days before Smetona's armed seizure of power. Kreve-Michevicius, the new chairman of the cabinet, was the best-known author in Lithuania; his writings had been issued in ten volumes. There was no doubt that the great mass of the people was sick of the Smetona dictatorship and trusted the new government. It was all very highly constitutional. Even the foreign legations admitted that.

"But we only half recognize you," the American Legation told Paletskis frankly. "Soon we may not recognize you at all." It was said in reply to a Lithuanian protest at the American seizure of all Lithuanian ships and funds in America. I had it from the Minister of Finance, a competent banker who felt much aggrieved by the unfriendly act.

The Lithuanian people recognized the government not only by words but by acts. Without any special decree they took it for granted that they were free to organize trade-unions, and began to do so at once. Meetings in factories elected factory committees, and sent delegates to form central trade-unions on an industrial basis. The day after my arrival in Kaunas I attended a big meeting of delegates from all the city's organized factories, called to launch an organizing drive throughout the country for the coming week-end. That evening at the American Legation they told me that "the Russians are starting trade-unions," and seemed surprised when I said that I had been at the meeting and had seen not a single Russian there.

I went with one of the organizers sent by that meeting to Siauliai, third city in size in Lithuania. We arrived Friday night after midnight, and he spent the small hours till morning trudging to homes of various workers whom he had known as energetic and reliable in the long illegal years. With these as staff, the campaign began as soon as the factories opened. By Saturday noon, the smaller factories held meetings; by evening the larger factories met. Throughout Sunday dozens of delegate meetings were held by industries. By Sunday noon, Siauliai workers were sending organizers to hold meetings of workers, farm hands, and peasants in little towns and villages

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fifteen miles away. Thus the great wave of organization rolled out from Kaunas, first into the larger centers, thence into the smaller places, and before the week end was over it was reaching the farms. There was tremendous variety in all this organization. Nothing was cut and dried. "The leather workers were organized before you got here," said the new chairman of the Siauliai Leather Workers Union to us proudly. "The workers' initiative does not wait on orders from above."

At a meeting of delegates from twelve textile factories, the announcement – made at my request – that an American writer was present and would like to speak to some of them after the meeting met with general applause. I saw different factory groups nudging each other and shoving members forward. Some twenty energetic women hiked up to the platform after the meeting, not merely as individuals but as delegates pushed forward by all.

"What shall I tell them in America about you?" I asked them.

"Tell them," said one, "that we are glad at last to have our word to say." "Tell them that we suffered long but now are happy," said another.

"Yes, happy, but also afraid," said a third. I asked what she was afraid of. "I am afraid that somehow or other those lords (bosses) will manage to come back again. Then they will kill us entirely," she said. "The foreman in our factory is scaring us," she added apologetically. "He says, 'Go ahead, go ahead while you can! But when you have to go back!...' "

In the city of Vilno, I found the new government attacking the problem of nationalities. "We must end this evil process whereby Poles first suppress Lithuanians, and then Lithuanians suppress Poles," said Vilno's new governor to me.

Vilno has seven nationalities. All lived in full separation and hated each other. "Whoever solves the problem of Vilno will solve the problem of Europe," they used to say around the headquarters of the League of Nations. The new progressive government was trying to solve it. Under Smetona only 30,000 people in Vilno had the vote; now it was given to everyone at once. Smetona officials would only receive requests in the Lithuanian language, which most of the people of Vilno, after

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twenty years of Polonization, could not speak. The new government sought officials who could speak as many languages as possible and required them to handle matters in whatever language the citizens chose to speak. Road-building, public construction works, and a system of public relief were set up to meet the needs of Vilno's hundred thousand unemployed.

In my talk with the governor of Vilno, a chance remark of mine reminded him that it was the season for mushrooms. He turned to his secretary. "Make a note," he said. "I must announce by radio and send word to the foresters that peasants may have free access to the berries and mushrooms in the woods." Then he turned back to me. "It is a little thing," he said, "but it means much in diet and in human dignity to the peasants. The Polish landlords never allowed it, nor did the Smetona government. I had overlooked it; I have only been three days on this governor's job." In that one act, he did more for good feeling in the Vilno district than the Smetona government had done in six months.

Meetings, demonstrations, marching of workers, and bands succeeded one another. After the organization of the trade-unions came the national elections. Candidates for the People's Sejm (Parliament) were rather hastily nominated by meetings of delegates from trade-unions and farmers' organizations; there was only one slate. While some of the Kaunas intellectuals objected to this, the workers and farmers I met were not worried by the form of election. They were coming out to cheer "our own People's Ticket," which consisted of locally prominent workers and farmers and nationally known intellectuals instead of the old corrupt official caste. The banners at this time – from July 7 to 14 – hailed chiefly the "working people's candidates." A few bore slogans "for a free Lithuania," letting the reader put his own interpretation on the word "free." Some of the marching workers were more specific; their banners, bearing the slogan, "Lithuania – the Thirteenth Soviet Republic," steadily increased. At this time, a month after the arrival of the Red Army, the people of Lithuania did not yet know that they were going to be a Soviet Republic, but they were discussing it everywhere.

During the election I traveled two hundred miles to visit

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the rural polling places. At Naumiestis on the German border, the polls were in a big high school so near the frontier that it looked straight toward a Lutheran church in East Prussia. The local committee had hung an enormous hammer and sickle on the side of the building toward Germany. "That's to show them over there," they said to me with proud defiance, quite oblivious of the fact that Moscow and Berlin were both denying friction.

Upstairs in the largest hall of the building, they were holding an "election dance." Husky girls sat around the hall or moved to music; you would never have known they were farm hands in their shiny rayon gowns. Many of them had "work tickets" that allowed them to cross the frontier to work on the farms of East Prussia. They told me that the East Prussian landlords and overseers commiserated with them, saying, "You poor things! In another week you will be completely Sovietized."

"What do you answer?" I asked them. A girl in black slinky rayon, tossed her head cheerfully. "I told my boss: 'Sure thing, that's what we're voting for! Maybe Koenigsberg will vote for it next.' He told me, 'All the same, we're going to have to fight you. Your Stalin is taking always more and more.'" They were well-informed young folks, these farm hands of the frontier.

When the votes were counted after the election, it was found that 95.5% of the total adult electorate had come to the polls. The Lithuanian government ministers were surprised at it; they had never dreamed there would be such a turnout. I was not surprised, for I had seen them coming out in the rural districts even in the rain and the mud. At the American Legation they explained that people were afraid not to come to the elections. But Smetona had openly used police terror to make the peasants come to previous elections, yet they had not come. It was not terror that brought them to the places I visited; it was new hope.

Events moved even faster after the elections. As the drive for trade-unions had aroused the workers, so the elections aroused the whole people. They were holding more meetings than ever and passing resolutions demanding the nationalization of banks and industry and the incorporation of Lithuania in the Soviet Union as a constituent republic. In the chief cities

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the industrial workers began electing "Soviets." It was done without hint of disloyalty to the government already existing. The Soviets were not yet government; they were formed "to assist our People's government in the preservation of law and order and the protection of property."

I attended the organization meetings of half a dozen of these Soviets. The workers assembled after work in some convenient place, most often in the factory yard or dining room. The chairman of the factory committee took the chair and made a short speech saying that they had already formed trade-unions to protect their interests as workers, but they needed a wider organization, a political organization, to protect their interests as citizens of the new Lithuania.

"We recently elected a People's Sejm." (Applause.) "It will soon meet to pass laws that we are all demanding for a better life for the workers." (Renewed applause.) "You yourselves see how the bosses are acting. They are afraid the Sejm is going to nationalize their factories. Quite likely it will." (Burst of bigger, better applause.) "So these bosses are already sabotaging their own factories and sneaking their capital abroad. If this continues, it will throw a lot of us out of work." (The faces grow intent to see what the speaker proposes to do.)

"We workers must protect these properties, keep them running, check up on raw materials and markets, prevent sabotage. Part of this our government is already doing, but the government cannot be everywhere. The workers are everywhere where there is raw material or factory property. We can keep it from being destroyed. Our immediate tasks are to co-operate with the city authorities to maintain order, to list all the industrial properties of Lithuania for the People's Sejm, and to see that all the new labor laws and any laws that may soon be passed about nationalizing industry are enforced. Work in the future will go on, not for the bosses' profit but to produce for the country's needs. If the bosses flee or are put out by the government, the workers remain in charge."

Then they proceeded to elect the "Soviet" on the basis of one delegate for every fifty workers. "Choose men of good repute, known as sober, reliable citizens to whom can be entrusted the properties of the people," the chairman said. By the

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end of the week their delegates were meeting with others to form a city-wide body checking the handling of public properties. It was done informally, democratically, yet with a high sense of destiny. What surprised me most was how easily the workers took to it, how sensible it all seemed. They were just decent, respectable people organizing to protect property from sabotage and to keep on with their jobs. For all that it was Revolution. The election of a working people's government and the presence of the Red Army somewhere in the offing had given to their Revolution the weapon of stability and law.

Even in the distant fishing villages on the Baltic they were conscious of their own initiative rather than of Moscow's desires. I visited a fishing hamlet near the Latvian border. The fishermen had organized their own co-operative and were listing their demands on the Kaunas government: a state purchasing agency for fish, scientific information about fishing, and insurance for boats, for sickness, and for the families of drowned fishermen. Wishing to be able to talk to the Red Army unit near the port, they had enrolled two hundred members in Russian study courses and secured as teachers three aged intellectuals, who dated back to tsarist days. As I left the little settlement, two of them stuck their heads into my auto.

"Tell Stasia, our deputy in Kaunas, to remember why we sent her to the Sejm," they said. "Don't let that Red Army get away. If she doesn't get us into the Soviet Union, let her never show her face around here again." They almost seemed to think that it depended on them and on their deputy, Stasia, whether Lithuania joined the U.S.S.R.

At 3:30 o'clock in the afternoon of July 21, 1940, Lithuania became a Soviet Socialist Republic by unanimous vote of the People's Sejm. Two hours later, also by unanimous vote, the Sejm voted to apply for admission into the U.S.S.R. as one of its constituent republics. This was the first sovereign state ever constitutionally entering the Soviet Union as a fully organized government. A few hours later, on the same day, Latvia and Esthonia followed.

The procedure was imposingly correct. On the high stage of the Kaunas Grand Opera House, under great Lithuanian flags, president Paletskis outlined the long centuries of oppression of

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the Lithuanian people, first by Polish and then by tsarist overlords. Then he spoke of the past twenty years of the Lithuanian Republic. "Our so-called independence was always a myth. Our country was the football of foreign imperialists; its fate was decided in London, Geneva, Warsaw, Berlin, but never in Kaunas. It was oppressed by its own capitalists and by international capitalists... Never again will capitalists exploit Lithuania."

On the second day of the same sessions, the decree of land nationalization was passed. Strange as it may seem, it was framed in a manner that won wide support from the peasants. The world economic crisis of the past decade bore heavily on Lithuanian agriculture, and most of the farm mortgages had become the property of the government by laws analogous to our own Farm Owners Loan Corporation. The new law cancelled fifty million dollars' worth of peasant indebtedness in accumulated taxes and mortgages owed to the state. It declared the tillers of the soil the rightful and only possessors of soil, which they hold without payment. The law prohibited the sale, mortgaging, and renting of land, or land speculation. On the basis of these principles, land was declared state property, entrusted to the soil tillers for their use. Individual holdings were limited to seventy-five acres, and all lands above this were to be distributed to peasants with insufficient land. Any attempt at forcible collectivization was declared a crime against the state.

Banks and factories were nationalized on the third day of the sessions without stopping a wheel in any factory. The existing owners and directors were ordered to remain on the job pending confirmation or removal by the state. Workers' guards were placed overnight at some of the biggest factories in Kaunas to forestall sabotage, but none was attempted. Workers' Soviets had already begun the listing of industrial properties in preparation for the transfer, which was done on the basis of bookkeepers' lists and formal receipts.

Between the sessions of the Sejm, I associated very informally with the deputies. When they learned that I was a writer from America, they invited me to share their dining room. I heard their discussions about entering the Soviet Union. It was plain that they felt themselves to be expressing the views of

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wide constituencies. A mechanic from Vilno said: "We have suffered long enough from narrow frontiers. For twenty years Vilno knows unemployment and hunger. We have seen how Bialystok, close to our borders, taken by the Soviets last autumn, already flourishes with new factories. If we join the Soviet Union, we shall have access to raw materials, our factories will open and there will be no unemployed."

A peasant delegate said: "All of our peasants say: Let be what social system you will, only no war. What is the use of all these little nations? They only put on heavy taxes for big armies and then their armies are no good anyway. We see what is happening in Europe to all the little countries. In the Soviet Union, we shall have the big Red Army that can really protect."

A well-known, non-Communist writer told me: "For us patriotic intellectuals there was a certain opium in the words 'free Lietuva.' Even when I lay in prison, I consoled myself with the thought that 'Lietuva' was free. But now we must look at the facts. We were never free from economic domination; we were always the puppet of some bigger land. In the present situation in Europe, there is no longer room for even those so-called independent states that existed before. There is only left the choice between our two great neighbors: Nazi Germany, which will destroy our state forms and despise our nationality, and Soviet Russia, which, while destroying our state forms, will make us equal citizens, respecting the nationality of the Lithuanian people. As an honest lover of Lithuanian freedom, I must vote to enter the U.S.S.R."

These were the views that caused the Sejm deputies to vote for union with the U.S.S.R. Sitting at tea in the session intervals in a room behind the theater boxes, President Paletskis said to me, cheerfully, informally: "Lithuania's path to socialism is the easiest ever known. We have no large capitalists and our intellectuals side with the workers and the farmers. We have done it all by the will of the Lithuanian people through constitutional forms." I have seldom seen a man more happy. It is tragic to think of what has happened to him now and to those hopeful deputies. Lithuania was overwhelmed by the first German advance. It was part of the Baltic buffer, which, by absorbing the first fortnight's shock of the Nazi blitzkrieg, gave

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time to the Soviet armies to mobilize. Its nationalized factories were seized by German capitalists; its leaders hunted by the German Gestapo.

Were the Baltic States then only a buffer to be sacrificed for others? Were all those hopes aroused only to be betrayed? The aroused hopes themselves are part of the answer; so are the guerrilla bands formed in their name. These peasants of the Baltic, who for centuries were serfs of the Russian tsar and the German barons, had twenty years of relative independence and one year's close contact with the Red Army and the life of the U.S.S.R. This lit a flame that the Nazis cannot smother and strengthened a will that will yet make them free.

Thirteen:

The Pact That Blocked Hitler

For nearly two years the phrase “Stalin-Hitler Alliance” was applied by American headlines to the Soviet-German nonaggression pact. Through constant repetition most of the American people came to believe that there was really some sort of an alliance between the two countries, which might have given “the green light” to Hitler in beginning the second World War. Hitler thought differently; in declaring war on the Soviets, he complained that they had persistently “conspired with Britain” to block him. There are more solid reasons than this absurdly propagandist statement for believing that history may speak of the pact as the pact that blocked Hitler.

Both Adolf Hitler and Joachim von Ribbentrop say that Germany and not the Soviet Union originally asked for the pact; since the admission hardly adds to their prestige, one may assume that it is true. “I brought myself, in August, 1939, to send my Foreign Minister to Moscow,” says Adolf Hitler.* The implication is that the pact had not been long debated. Evidence from Moscow corroborates this. In explaining the pact to the Soviet people, Vyacheslav Molotov said that up to the last moment the U.S.S.R. had hoped for an alliance with Great Britain and France. The conditions under which that proposed alliance failed to materialize have already been discussed in some detail.† We shall briefly recapitulate them, since it is a much-debated and crucial point whether the Soviet Union ever had an honest chance to ally herself with Britain and France in originally stopping Hitler.

For a series of years culminating in the Munich Pact, the Chamberlain government had not only given the green light to Hitler, but had fueled his juggernaut in the hope of directing its route East. In spite of the cries of protest with which British Liberal opinion greeted Hitler’s shocking invasion of Prague, the British Government gave no practical proof that its attitude

* Speech on declaration of war against the U.S.S.R., June 22, 1941.

† See Chapter IX.

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had changed. So-called “pledges” were given both to Poland and Rumania, but not a single concrete step was taken to implement them. No fortifications were built in Poland, not a trench was dug. No British planes, ground crews, or technicians were sent to Poland, nor were aircraft defenses set up. Even a proposed demonstration flight of British bombers was rejected for fear of irritating Hitler. The Polish General Haller, later when touring America, said in a press interview in Washington, D. C., “Poland was ready for war with the Soviet Union but not with Nazi Germany.”

At the zero hour, when the chancelleries of Europe knew that Hitler was preparing to seize Danzig and the Polish Corridor, by bluff if possible or by war if he must, Chamberlain still suggested to the House of Commons a nonaggression pact with Germany; Lord Halifax still proposed to Hitler “an amiable settlement” of the Danzig question; the Hudson-Wohlthat discussions intimated that Britain was ready for a billion-pound financing of Hitler’s aggressions, and the simultaneous refusal of five million pounds to Poland implied that that country need expect no help.* Even after the zero hour, when Poland was invaded, no help came from Britain. The Anglo-French Allies did not even create any pressure on the Western front. While 98% of Germany’s first-line planes mercilessly bombed the Poles, the Royal Air Force conscientiously dropped leaflets over German towns. “Stating it with brutal frankness, Poland is to be left to her fate,” cabled the *New York Times* correspondent† from London when Poland’s plea for planes was turned down.

This treatment of Poland seemed to the Soviet leaders a planned effort to send Poland the way of Czechoslovakia in order to bring the Nazi forces in full war array against the So-

* Also the sending of Lord Kemsley to Hitler as Chamberlain’s personal emissary to work out an appeasement scheme, the efforts to have Dr. Karl Burckhardt, League of Nations Commissioner in Danzig, sell out that city, the Papal and other plans for conferences to consider – without the presence of the U.S.S.R. – the Nazi demand for “lebensraum.”

† Raymond Daniell, September 16.

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viet borders. The Chamberlain guarantee had so often turned out to be the kiss of death. The Soviet-German nonaggression pact, on the other hand, gave the U.S.S.R. almost two additional years to improve its preparations. Through it, the Soviets obtained far stronger outposts in the Baltic than they had even ventured to suggest to Chamberlain. They secured a wide buffer belt from the coast of Finland to the Black Sea.

The nonaggression pact was not an alliance. The U.S.S.R. did not sign with Hitler the type of mutual assistance pact she had offered to Britain and France. She signed a pact practically similar in form to the various nonaggression pacts she had been signing for fifteen years. It was not even mutually exclusive. It did not preclude the signing of similar pacts with Britain and France. Without violating the pact, the Soviet Union was free to oppose, even by armed force, a German attack on Turkey or Yugoslavia. She had agreed not to take part in aggression against Germany, but had promised nothing about resisting an aggression that the Nazis might start. We shall see that the Soviet Union actually did resist such aggressions without violating the pact. The pact did more; the Soviet Union, acting as a neutral, blocked Nazi expansion on several important occasions more effectively than she could have done by engaging in war.

The pact was accompanied by a trade agreement in which the U.S.S.R. agreed to supply Germany with certain raw materials in exchange for German machines. No estimates ever made of this trade place it as high as that carried on in 1931 between the U.S.S.R. and the German Republic – in other words, normal commercial trade. The U.S.S.R. never became the “arsenal” for Germany in anything like the sense in which America, while still technically neutral, became the arsenal for Great Britain. America has even been the arsenal for Japan in her war against China to a far greater extent than the U.S.S.R. ever was for Germany. The only commodity sent by the Soviets to Germany that could be classed as a war commodity was oil; the highest foreign guesses assume that the Soviets may possibly have sent as much as a million tons. America’s supply of oil to Japan even under the government licensing system was more

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than three times as much.* In the second year of the pact, the Soviets signed a trade treaty with Rumania by which they got Rumanian oil that Hitler presumably wanted.

There is no proof of the often-made assertion that the non-aggression pact provoked Hitler's march into Poland. Four months before the German-Polish war broke, American ambassadors in Europe were cabling the United States State Department that the betting was ten to one that there would be war.† Poland had specifically refused Soviet assistance; the pact therefore did not affect the war in Poland but tended to limit its spread to other lands. Its immediate effect, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, was a slight easing of the situation, as far as most of Eastern Europe was concerned. The lessening of tension in Berlin after its signing, the similar lessening of tension in the Baltic, the Sixteen Points grudgingly given out by Hitler, all this suggested that Hitler was ready – temporarily, no doubt – to settle for Danzig and a plebiscite in the corridor.

Still less is there any proof that the pact provided for a “partitioning of Poland,” though apparently mutual spheres of influence were discussed. Joachim von Ribbentrop states that the fixing of the frontiers was done at the later conference on September 28. This is supported by many details of the German-Polish War. When the Soviets began mobilizing for the march into Poland, Berlin papers expressed “surprise and concern.” The boundary between Germany and the U.S.S.R. in Poland was changed three times. This suggests a rapid improvising by two powers that do not wish to fight each other, rather than a predetermination of boundaries. Shall one suppose that Hitler's forces went all the way to Lvov and for several days violently attacked that city for the purpose of giving it to the U.S.S.R.? It seems more likely that they went to get it for Hitler and were thwarted by the coming of Soviet troops. This was the interpretation made by most of Eastern Europe.

* 1938 – 32.8 million barrels, 1940 – 24.6 million, equivalent to more than three million tons in the latter year.

† *American White Paper*, Alsop and Kintner, pages 35 and following.

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The first great check the Soviets gave Hitler was given by that march into eastern Poland. It blocked for more than a year Hitler's drive into the Balkans and into the Baltic States. "The action of the Soviets has checked whatever designs Herr Hitler had on Rumania," was an immediate London view.* Leslie Hore-Belisha, the British War Minister, was only one of several important Britons who held that the real German objective had been not only Poland, but Rumania and the Balkans, and that this had been blocked by the Soviet troops. A later dispatch from Bucharest to the *New York Times* even said that the Rumanian Secret Service claimed to have known the exact number of divisions Hitler had planned to send into the Balkans that autumn.

Some evidence that Hitler had planned to invade the Balkans and possibly the Baltic is given by the strategy of their Polish campaign. After cracking the Polish front, the German forces pushed rapidly in two directions, leaving behind them great areas of Poland untouched. They drove southeast to Lvov, gateway to the Balkans, and northeast toward Vilno, gateway to the Baltic States. That the Red Army was moving to prevent this was implied by an order to Soviet troops to "reach Vilno by midnight" when they were still seventy miles away. The swift advance, confined by necessity to a relatively small group of motorized forces, led to unusual Red Army casualties at Vilno. The only conceivable reason for haste was that the Germans were coming up the railroad from Brest-Litovsk.

Bloody corroboration of the Nazi intent to invade Rumania was given by the assassination of Premier Armand Calinescu by the pro-Nazi Iron Guards as the Germans approached. High sources in Bucharest hinted that something far more important than a mere assassination was about to happen.† The Rumanian secret police hastened to smash alleged uprisings of the Iron Guard which were supposed to have been planned to synchronize with the arrival of the German forces in the familiar Nazi style. One such uprising actually came off in a Ruma-

* *New York Times* dispatch, September 28.

† A. P. dispatch, Sept. 21, 1939.

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nian town on the borders of Poland, only to find that the troops seen on the other side of the river were not the Germans but the Red Army. Participants in this abortive uprising were at once arrested.

The Red Army march would thus seem to have been timed almost to the split second. Half a day earlier a Polish government might have been found still functioning sufficiently to declare the Soviet march an act of war, thus putting the Soviets into war with Poland's ally, Britain. Half a day later the Red Army would have been too late to prevent Nazi uprisings in Rumania from joining the German troops on the Polish-Rumanian border. The Red Army marched on the precise half-day when the Polish government was crossing the border into Rumania, just before the Nazis arrived.

An even more serious blow to Hitler was seen in the dramatic expulsion of the Germans from the Baltic States – that famous and traditional outpost of German imperialism to the East. People traveling in Germany at the time know that this sudden evacuation caused a great deal of adverse comment and was suspected to be due to some Russian demand. How bitterly the German government had opposed it was not realized until Hitler admitted it in his declaration of war. "The consequences of this treaty were very severe. Far more than 500,000 men and women... were forced to leave their homeland practically overnight.... To all this I remained silent because I had to." Are these the words in which a victor speaks?

In a sense, the expulsion of the Baltic Germans and the Soviet penetration into the Baltic countries seem to have been direct retribution for the German assault on Poland. A careful reading of the declarations of both Hitler and Von Ribbentrop makes this evident. Both of them state that under the terms of the first pact, Lithuania belonged to the German sphere of interests, but that when the final boundaries were fixed in the second pact of September 28, "the German government relinquished their interests in the greater part of Lithuania... with a heavy heart." All of this seems to indicate that the original pact did not necessarily predicate war in Poland, but that when Germany marched, with the apparent objective of spreading as far north and south in Eastern Europe as possible, the Soviets

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also marched and at once took advantage of Hitler's predicament – his unwillingness to fight simultaneously Britain, France, and Russia – to force the Germans out of the Baltic States.

Hitler began to ask for peace from all the world. Not because he had won; victorious armies do not sue for peace. The winter of 1939-1940 was marked by his "peace offensives." The German government, blocked in its plans to consolidate Eastern Europe, was not prepared for the drive into Western Europe, which required several months to organize. The Chamberlain government, torn by the pressure of different interests, was unable to make either peace or war. This seems the most natural explanation of that long winter of the false war which was called the "sitzkrieg."

The second great check the Soviets gave Hitler's expansion was in the summer of 1940 at the height of Hitler's victory in Western Europe. The German armies had seized Denmark and Norway and had crashed through Holland, Belgium and France. Having occupied the whole Atlantic Coast of Europe, they were all set for invasion of Britain. The British Army, completely disorganized, had abandoned its best mechanized equipment on the beach at Dunkerque. Military experts in all lands expected an attempted German invasion of Britain and most of them stated that British defenses were inadequate to withstand it. Columnists discussed the possible evacuation of the British government to Canada. It was the lowest point in Britain's possibility of resistance, only partially veiled from the British people by the attempt to make a spiritual victory out of the terrible Dunkerque losses.

Hitler's failure to invade England at that moment will probably cost him the war. It was his supreme opportunity to strike the deathblow at the British Empire. Why did he hesitate? People in Belgium and other points of the occupied Atlantic Coast knew that German soldiers were preparing for invasion of Britain. I was in Germany that June, and the Press Department told me, "You have come too late for our personally conducted trip to Paris, but there will be a similar trip to London in a few weeks."

Hitler himself has bitterly given the reason for his inability

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to invade Britain. At almost the split second, on June 28, a few days after Petain had asked for an armistice and as the Nazi armies prepared for Britain, the Red Army marched into Bessarabia. The effect this had on the Balkans worried Hitler so much that he drew back from the contemplated invasion of Britain and decided to consolidate the Balkans first. He did not dare expend the tremendous strength necessary for an invasion of Britain while the Red Army advanced in his rear.

Hitler's own statement is as follows:

While our soldiers from May 5, 1940, on had been breaking Franco-British power in the West, Russian military deployment on our eastern frontier was being continued to a more and more menacing extent.

From August, 1940, on I therefore considered it to be in the interest of the Reich no longer to permit our eastern provinces... to remain unprotected in the face of this tremendous concentration of Bolshevist divisions.

Thus there resulted British-Soviet Russian co-operation intended mainly at the tying up of such powerful forces in the east that radical conclusion of the war in the west, particularly as regards aircraft, could no longer be vouched for by the German High Command.

The Red Army's march into Bessarabia was thus, according to Hitler, the chief thing that saved Britain from invasion. He may be exaggerating somewhat to make a case. He is certainly overstating the "British and Russian co-operation" that he claims was behind the Soviet move. The Soviets marched into Bessarabia to strengthen themselves and not to strengthen Britain. They knew, however, (and probably Churchill did) that they were helping to save Britain as well. Nothing can be more certain than that the Soviet leaders, for all their long antagonism to the British Empire, did not want to see the tremendous aggrandizement of Hitler that a successful invasion of Britain would entail. In this their point of view was singularly like that of Winston Churchill: whatever the past and however hateful the ideology, whoever fought Hitler was becoming their ally.

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In a certain sense, what Hitler called “co-operation between Russia and Britain” really began in the summer of 1940, with Churchill’s accession to power in May and the Soviet march into Bessarabia in June. The tremendous strength of the German armies and the speed with which they crashed through the various countries of Europe worried not only Britain. It worried the Russians also; I heard such worries expressed in the autumn of 1940 in Moscow. Objectively, the two countries henceforth began to have a common interest in promoting anything that thwarted Hitler. Even subjectively, that summer was the turning point, for the Russians believed that Churchill really intended to fight Hitler rather than use him to fight the Soviets, as Chamberlain had wished. From that time on, therefore, a certain co-operation actually began, unorganized or organized only by the instinct of a common goal.

Hitler had everything to lose by actual war in the Balkans. He relied on the Balkans as an economic base. It was to his interests to control them by economic penetration or, if necessary, to seize them by a rapid “blitzkrieg” type of war. It was very much against his interests to destroy the harvests and the industries of the Balkans by any serious conflict. Two important events had disturbed the Balkans as an economic base for Hitler: the Soviet march into Bessarabia, which both took territory and deeply stirred the anti-Nazi forces in all of Eastern Europe, and Mussolini’s attack on Greece, which disrupted the Balkans without subduing them.

The German drive to the Balkans – for which Hitler abandoned the proposed invasion of Britain – had therefore these goals: to smash the British-Greek armies as rapidly as possible, to consolidate the whole Balkan peninsula against the Soviet Union, and eventually to seize the eastern Mediterranean and the Suez Canal by an advance through both Africa and Turkey. Instead of attacking the British Isles, Hitler would attack the British Empire. He especially needed swift access to the oil and other riches of the Middle East. American aid was increasingly flowing into Britain and it looked like a long-time conflict. The drive was therefore on for oil.

“From that time on,” declares Von Ribbentrop, “Soviet Russia’s anti-German policy began to become steadily more

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apparent." Thus he formulates the fact that Hitler's drive into the Balkans met increasing resistance from the U.S.S.R. The friction was so obvious that the whole world remarked it. Among its outer signs were: the Soviet censure of the Bulgarian government for capitulating to Hitler; the Soviet nonaggression pact with Yugoslavia; the endorsement by the Soviet press of Greek and Yugoslav military resistance; the Soviet statement to Turkey that any act of resistance to the German passage of troops would be "sympathetically understood" by the U.S.S.R. Besides these open acts of the Soviet Union, the statements by Hitler and Von Ribbentrop have now revealed that the Soviets protested to Germany against the sending of German troops into Bulgaria, that the U.S.S.R. proposed an alliance to Bulgaria, which the pro-Nazi Bulgarian government refused, and that Soviet determination to prevent German armies from crossing the Dardanelles was a serious and perhaps deciding factor in causing Turkey to refuse their passage.

Conflict between Hitler and the Soviets sharpened in Yugoslavia. Here Britain and the U.S.S.R. found themselves in active, even if unorganized, co-operation. Von Ribbentrop charges that the U.S.S.R. "secretly assisted Yugoslavia in arming against the Axis powers" from November 19, 1940 on. He claims that the sudden overthrow of the government in Yugoslavia after it had agreed to let the German troops pass through unopposed was inspired in part by Great Britain but more by the U.S.S.R. After the Serbian government fell, according to Von Ribbentrop, "almost two hundred Yugoslav aircraft carrying Soviet-Russian and British agents were flown off, partly to Russia - these officers are today serving in the Russian Army - and partly to Egypt." It is an interesting detail, if true.

In any event, it was true that both Britain and the U.S.S.R. did what they could to inspire and help the Yugoslav resistance. The Serbs were crushed by the might of the German armies, but the fact that they resisted spoiled Hitler's plan to use Yugoslavia as his highway into Greece. Yugoslavia is today useless to Hitler, through the internal struggles that were chiefly inspired by the Soviets. I myself knew, in Moscow in late autumn of 1940, that the Soviets were sending food to both Greece and Yugoslavia. In all of this, and even in the shipping

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of the alleged armaments, the Soviet Union was within its rights as a neutral nation and within the nonaggression pact. To enable a Balkan state to protect itself against invasion could be called an act of aggression only by a Nazi imperialist.

Hitler achieved important success in his drive to the Balkans and into Africa. He crushed the Greeks and drove the British Army into the sea from Southern Greece and Crete. He smashed Yugoslavia and terrorized Rumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria into abject submission. He drove General Wavell out of Libya. Nonetheless he failed in his major objective, which was Mosul oil and the Suez Canal. The chief factor in his failure was the Soviet Union, whose pressure on Turkey, when added to the British pressure, prevented the German armies from crossing the Dardanelles.

Again the Soviet Union, in saving herself, was also saving Britain. The "Anglo-Russian conspiracy," as Hitler plaintively called it, was really beginning to work. Hitler's march to the East so menaced the interests of both these nations that, without an alliance, perhaps without even a mutual conference, they were acting in accord.

Only the future will show what went on in tight little Turkey under the pressures of Germany, Britain and the U.S.S.R. It was clear at least that Hitler had reached the Turkish borders, and the world's commentators predicted that his next move would be against the Dardanelles. Instead of this, he chose a long and difficult way southward, fighting through Greece and then proceeding by water-jump to Crete. It looked as if he might achieve a new road to Suez by parachutists from island to island. Possibly these island jumps proved too costly. Possibly, as some think, Hitler became convinced through Rudolf Hess that England would in part support him if he turned against the Bolsheviks. All that we know now is that the fall of Suez was expected by military experts, as the invasion of Britain had been expected the previous year. Hitler's forces were said to be already in Syria. They had gone instead in the other direction to the borders of the U.S.S.R.

Hitler saw at last that while the greatest ultimate foe of German expansion is the Anglo-American joint empire, which holds the seas and most of the continents of the world, yet the

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most immediate barrier in his march toward world domination was that neutral country, the U.S.S.R. Under the nonaggression pact and using its position as a neutral nation, the Soviet Union, in the twenty-two months of the pact's duration, had checked Nazi expansion more than it was checked by all of Europe's armed forces – Polish, Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian, French, Greek, Yugoslav, and British – combined. Not once in that time had Soviet policy harmed in any way the German people. Yet steadily it had thwarted the Nazi imperialist advance. Three times, especially, this had happened. The Soviet march into Poland checked for a year the German advance to the east. The Soviet march into Bessarabia and into the Baltic States caused Hitler, by his own account, to abandon the invasion of Britain. The complex power politics of the Soviets in the Balkans prevented Hitler's drive through the Dardanelles.

Could the U.S.S.R. have done so much as partner of Chamberlain's Britain? Not if Chamberlain had remained at the helm. The history of his promises and betrayals justifies the Soviet conviction that he would have left them alone to fight an onslaught from Europe and Asia, nay more, that Britain, France, and America would have been banker and arsenal for the anti-Soviet war. But if the Soviets could have made an alliance with that other Britain, which later threw out Chamberlain, then they might indeed have done more than they did alone as a neutral. Acting in time and with determination, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union might have stopped the second World War.

As it was, the U.S.S.R.'s lone neutral hand blocked Hitler's immediate plans for expansion more than did the combination of Hitler's open foes. Hitler therefore turned and struck at the Soviet Union in the mightiest assault of human history.

Fourteen:

War of the Whole People

"The greatest military march in the world's history," was the claim made by Adolf Hitler as his armies struck at the Soviet Union in a surprise attack at dawn on June 22, 1941. This was no overstatement. By that dawn onslaught the world's two largest armies were locked in the most decisive struggle mankind has ever known.

For nearly a year Germany had laid the groundwork for this invasion. After the Red Army marched into Bessarabia and Hitler turned east, one hundred German divisions were kept continuously along the Russo-German border. Many strategic roads were built in Poland. By occupying Rumania and later by sending large units to Finland, the Germans gained access to the whole eighteen-hundred-mile Soviet frontier. The German Army attacked with full strength along the whole length of this border, equivalent to the Canadian border from Vancouver to Buffalo. Thousands of German planes smashed at Soviet airfields before their occupants knew that a war was on. Hordes of German bombers and tanks led the hitherto unbeatable German military machine, striking in the north from Finland toward Leningrad and the Arctic port of Murmansk, in the center from Poland and the Baltic States toward Moscow, and in the south from Rumania toward Kiev, Odessa, and the wheat and oil beyond. Hitler claimed, perhaps accurately, that nine million armed men were actively engaged; in both countries millions more waited as reserves.

The prevailing view in Berlin, London, and Washington was that Russian resistance would be smashed by a "one-month blitz." Even before the war, some of our best-known columnists tried to tell Hitler that the U.S.S.R. was easy and valuable prey.* It was not only predicted that the Red Army

* Walter Lippmann, New York *Herald-Tribune*, March 6, 1941, suggested that Hitler should use his army against Russia "which is easy to conquer and well worth conquering." Leland Stowe, *Chicago Daily News*, Feb. 27, 1941, said the Ukraine is "the only com-

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would be rapidly smashed, but that peasants would revolt and that sections of the U.S.S.R. would set up puppet governments under Hitler. A fortnight after the war began, Washington cautiously admitted that "the Russians have put up the strongest resistance the Germans have met." Later the press was saying: "So far the Russians have done the incredible; they have stalled the German Wehrmacht."

After six weeks of fighting, a swift re-evaluation of the Soviet Union began both in America and Britain. Prime Minister Churchill said in his August 24 broadcast:

The Russians fight with magnificent devotion. Not only that, our generals who have visited the Russian front line report with admiration the efficiency of their military organization and the excellence of their equipment.

War correspondents in Europe began to say that the fighting was "the hardest the world has ever seen," that the Germans had found in the Soviet people "a new type of enemy and a new type of war."*

The first evaluation of the war from Soviet sources was made in Stalin's radio address to the people two weeks after war began. Stalin said that the Germans had already taken considerable territory; he clearly implied that they were going to take more. For while he ordered the Red Army to "defend every inch of Soviet soil," he also told what must be done "in case of forced retreat" and "in areas occupied by the enemy." He gave instructions for orderly evacuation in which collective farms would participate, thus implying that the Germans would go further than the buffer belt, which had few collective farms. It was later rumored in Washington that Stalin even told Harry Hopkins that Kiev might have to be evacuated. If true, this was not surprising, for Kiev is very vulnerable; in the earlier wars of intervention it changed hands seventeen times.

Stalin told his people that the German Army was not in-

paratively cheap and remunerative blitzkrieg that Hitler can now find anywhere."

* Percival Knauth, *New York Times Magazine*, September 7, 1941.

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vincible and that there was no excuse for "panic-mongering.... There are no invincible armies and never have been." However, the enemy is "implacable... armed to the teeth with tanks and aircraft," and the Soviet people must understand "the full immensity of the danger." The Germans had gained an important military advantage by the surprise attack, which hurled 170 divisions against the U.S.S.R. "in a state of complete readiness... whereas Soviet troops had still to effect mobilization." Factors which Stalin knew but for diplomatic reasons did not mention were the experience gained by the German war machine in two years of victory and the enormous reserves of war supplies and armament factories taken over intact by Hitler in Europe, from the great Skoda Works which he got as a gift from Chamberlain to the stores of American planes and munitions secured through the collapse of France. It would take some time for the U.S.S.R. to overcome these handicaps, but Stalin seemed confident of the ultimate outcome. He summoned the Soviet people not merely to resolute resistance but "forward to victory."

The larger strategy of the war implied in Stalin's analysis was soon elaborated by military experts in all lands. The German Army would naturally make the most of its initial advantages and would try to force a decision before winter, even by wasteful use of men and materiel. The Germans had an immediate preponderance, both of seasoned troops and of war materials, which they might cease to have if they allowed the Red Army to gain experience and the Soviet armament factories to continue operations. Soviet strategy must be the exact opposite: to defend territory with as little wastage of men and material as possible, to make the enemy pay dearly for every advance, and to retreat when necessary to preserve their armed forces intact. The chief of the Soviet press department, Lozovsky, told a correspondent that the Soviets would of course "abandon a city to save a living army." There were several times in the early part of the war when British strategists, judging from London, thought that the Red Army should have retreated sooner than it did.

The first impression the war seems to have made upon the Germans was that Red Army men fought with spectacular val-

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or. They complained that the Soviet soldiers did not fight “sensibly” but kept on even when surrounded and outnumbered. “These fellows,” said a Nazi war correspondent on the second morning of the war, “fight with the consistency of madness until they cannot move a limb.” The Berlin correspondent of the *New York Times* noted:

Unlike that of any of the Germans’ former opponents, Russian morale appears to be totally oblivious to tank and Stuka attacks, and the Russians seem to continue to fight, particularly while the dreaded dive-bomber formations are assembling to break their resistance... This inability to throw panic into the Soviet ranks necessitated new and different tactics in Russia.*

The Russians themselves did not make so high a claim as was conceded to them by their opponents. Marshal Timoshenko frankly told an interviewer that the first attacks of the terrible dive-bombers had considerably worried his troops. They soon got used to it, and even displayed amusement at some of the whistling and noise-producing devices with which the Germans tried to make “psychological attack.”

The first stories of Red Army valor reached the world from Berlin rather than from Moscow. A German soldier, for instance, told of an attack on a forester’s cabin, which turned out to be a Russian machine-gun nest. Several times the Germans thought that the nest was completely demolished. They shot into the house with field guns until it was in flames. “But the [Russian] machine guns continued to spatter pitilessly.... We encircled them and threw in flame from flame throwers till the entire house was ablaze. Still the dare-devils would spring out of it, throw a bunch of hand grenades and then slip in again. Finally, our artillery crashed the charred, blackened ruins to pieces, not a single man escaped from that hell.” Many similar tales were told by Germans to indicate that in taking forts they had to blow them apart wall by wall and room by room and that even when they thought they had destroyed everything living, they found wounded Red Army soldiers still fighting on.

* C. Brooks Peters, July 25, 1941.

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To the world's military experts, the first surprise of the war was the Red Army's excellent equipment and technique. The air force, tank arm, and artillery proved surprisingly up to date. Observers reported tremendous tank battles in which "the clash of steel against steel sounded like the end of the world."* In these battles it was noted that Russian tanks could often smash or overturn the Germans in head-on collision. The Red Army had several types of tanks which the Wehrmacht lacked: high-speed tanks, amphibians and "giants" of one hundred tons or more. Not only the equipment of the Red Army, but its staff work and strategy showed complete mastery of the complex processes of modern war. "It is an army modern in structure, tactically efficient, strategically realistic," said one expert.† Another analyzed the Russian tactical methods as including "defensive positions of great depth, stoutly held everywhere, camouflage of remarkable skill, protecting Russian artillery from German air attack, mobile counterattack units against German panzer columns, and an air force which fully supports the ground troops."‡

As the war progressed, military observers even declared that the Russians had "solved the blitzkrieg" by the tactics of permitting a break-through of the panzer columns and then cutting them off from their supporting infantry. "Infantry is the weak spot in the German Army," claimed a Soviet war correspondent. "It is accustomed to move behind great masses of tanks. When isolated its losses are enormous." The tactic with which the Red Army opposed the blitzkrieg demanded tremendous morale and initiative. Tremendous bodies of Soviet troops were left far behind by the German spearheads and were sometimes even encircled by the enemy. According to previous military theory, they were "entrapped." These Red Army forces fought their way across and through the German encirclement, disrupted German communications, and in the

* Erskine Caldwell, *PM*.

† Max Werner, *New Republic*, August 18, 1941.

‡ Major George Fielding Eliot, *New York Herald-Tribune*, July 29, 1941.

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last resort were capable of splitting up into small units and rallying the local population around them to form guerrilla bands. It almost seemed as if they had been left behind on purpose; if not, they showed surprising initiative in meeting conditions.

The amazing tale of one of these lost divisions, which finally fought its way back to the main lines of the Red Army after more than a month in Western Byelo-Russia, shows the chaotic condition of the German rear. The division lost contact with its higher command during the first German offensive into Byelo-Russia. Several hours later, German planes circled overhead and dropped a map showing that the division was encircled and should surrender. "Thank you for giving us our bearings," the commander remarked, glancing at the enemy planes. Taking advantage of the map, he evaded the enemy troops and turned east toward the main Red Army lines. During the ensuing month of fighting, the division exhausted its ammunition but captured and used German supplies.

It became necessary, on one occasion, to have exact information of the enemy strength. An exceedingly short officer, less than five feet tall, went to a village, donned children's clothes and gathered a group of Russian children. They wandered to the bank of a stream where German officers were bathing, and the captain stole maps and documents from the officers' clothes under cover of the children's play. Another time, the division reached an important highway along which German motor transport was moving at a fast rate. Waiting till dusk, the Russians killed the German traffic officer and held up the enemy automobiles with flashlight signals while the division crossed the road. Then a Russian soldier, in the slain man's uniform, deliberately misdirected the Nazi tank columns along the wrong route.

"For the first time," said a *New York Times* editorial, "Hitler is fighting in a new dimension." It is doubtful if the writer realized the full truth of his words. He was speaking of geography, but the Red Army had created a "defense in depth" that transcends geography and reaches into the whole consciousness of the Soviet people. The war has become a "total defense," a war of the entire Soviet people as a unit. It is the first time in histo-

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ry that such a total defense has been seen, the first time that it has become possible. It is possible in the U.S.S.R. because the whole population rallies around a country whose wealth they all share, and because the Soviet people and the Red Army have grown accustomed to joint activities for two decades.

Despite the picturesque tales of guerrillas that have found their way into the American and British press, it is doubtful whether the essence of Soviet guerrilla war is yet understood by the Anglo-American experts. They are accustomed to think in terms of the wars of Europe, where the army does the fighting, while the civilians make their peace with the invader. At most, the experts think of guerrilla war as an affair of pitchforks and shotguns that are seized by a desperate population after the regular army has gone. In Soviet tactics there is no break between the activities of the Army and those of the people. They fit into each other flexibly at all times: before, during, and after the regular army's retreat.

The collective farm, as we have seen in an earlier chapter,* fits in admirably to the military organization; it already has its defense group, its labor battalions, its organization for caring for children and the weak. If the farm is in the immediate rear of the Red Army, its activities are those typified in the Ukrainian village "K." Through its formerly quiet streets roll endless truckloads of fuel and ammunition bound for the front; in case of need, the collective farm's machine shop offers minor repairs. Many of the farmers are now in the Army and are replaced by women. The remainder have rapidly harvested the crops and threshed more than half of them, taking them to the railroad for transport to the rear. During a brief lull on the front, fifty Red Army men came to assist in the reaping and threshing; they accounted for fifty acres of peas and forty acres of wheat before they had to go back to fight. Some forty of the farmers are working full time repairing roads for the Army. Gangs of girls and women, under the direction of Army sappers, dig trenches and camouflage them with foliage.

This organized dovetailing of the activities of Army and people continues without a break if the Army is forced to re-

* See Chapter VII.

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treat. Some of the civilians retreat with it as labor gangs. They destroy the village completely before they go. A detailed account of this "total destruction" was given by a village designated only as "X." When the Germans approached, a group of young people entered the granary, loaded nine trucks, and sent them to the railway station camouflaged under green boughs. Four tons of barley and vetch, which could not be removed, were burned. The tractors plowed down and uprooted the beets. The milkmaids drove the cows through the maturing wheat and rye; they were followed by eighty girls and women with sickles and scythes who chopped up what was left. The mechanics broke the fuel tank; the blacksmiths destroyed the harvesters and thresher. The broken machinery was thrown down a steep precipice. The people burned the pigsty, cowsheds, granary, beehives, and the new stable. The best horses were driven to the forest for the use of guerrillas. Fourteen fattened pigs were slaughtered for the Red Army commissary, the rest were driven to the railroad and shipped to the rear. The wells were filled with earth, and the water from the pond was let out by breaking the dike. Even the green apples were picked by the gardener with the remark, "They shall not ripen for the robbers."

If possible, the entire population of the village scatters in an organized manner. If there is time, the children and weaker adults are evacuated by train to the interior of the country; a fortnight after the war began, trains of evacuated people began arriving in Sverdlovsk and other towns of the Urals, where jobs or accommodations in rest homes were at once available for the newcomers – a fate quite different from that which befell the refugees of Western Europe. The most able-bodied of the population go into hiding in the woods as a guerrilla organization that harries the enemy's rear under direct orders from the Red Army and often in co-ordination with the fighting at the front.

Leadership and equipment for these guerrillas are supplied partly from their local Osoaviakhim group, which even in peacetime often possessed rifles, machine guns, anti-tank guns, mine throwers, flame throwers and other modern weapons of war. These are supplemented by sections of the regular

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Red Army that have “disintegrated” under the German attack. Any section of the Red Army that is surrounded fights on a circular front as long as it can afford to do so, and then scatters over the countryside to furnish both leadership and equipment to the guerrillas. Thus there comes into being a kind of guerrilla organization such as has never been seen before. It consists of all types of troops: infantry, artillery, engineers, cavalry. They try to avoid fighting large units of the enemy. They “specialize” in attacking headquarters, railroads, bridges, military trains, and stray German generals. As a side line, they take care of any local “Quislings” that may emerge, thus making it impossible for the Germans to stabilize the rear. The guerrillas communicate with the Red Army by two-way radio or by plane sent from headquarters; some of them have even their own planes.

From the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea, these guerrillas materialize wherever there are German troops. They slash out from ambush, strike in the night, and vanish, leaving the Germans to count their dead. A favorite tactic is to cut German telephone and telegraph wires and ambush the technicians sent to repair them; for weeks at a time, German communications in some areas have been interrupted. Another tactic is to sow the roads with steel spikes in order to damage tires. This is especially effective on narrow forest trails used by motorcycle messengers; when they dismount to repair the tires, they are killed from ambush.

Any new ideas developed by any guerrillas are rapidly spread by guerrilla newspapers, which circulate in the occupied area. “You can’t stop the wind in the fields,” say the local farmers of “Grandfather’s” detachment, a band which has already won renown. One of its exploits was the clever capture of eight German tanks. A sixteen-year-old boy brought the information that the tanks had halted in a certain gully; cautious investigation showed that they had run out of gasoline. The guerrillas formed three groups: riflemen, gasoline throwers and tractor drivers. They located themselves at strategic spots. On a signal the gasoline throwers hurled thirty bottles of gasoline at the four end tanks, which went up in flame. Twelve Germans jumped out of the other four tanks and were shot by the

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rifleman. The four tanks that were captured intact were promptly driven away by the tractor drivers.

"We are camped in a virgin forest;" wrote one guerrilla commander. "Only the people who guard our supplies stay in camp; the rest are always on the march. The population of the occupied villages loves us like a mother and keeps us informed of the enemy's movements. The Nazis worry themselves to death hunting us." Not all these irregular fighters are in the woods; some of them are in cities. In one Russian city, the civilians broke a siege after German tanks had reached the outskirts and encircled the town. Men and women poured out of factories and offices, went to the front lines, dug fortifications and held off the German attacks until they were relieved by the Red Army.

The carrying of information to the Red Army by civilians has been a valuable aid. The Merkulov brothers in the Smolensk district brought such accurate data on the location of several machine-gun nests and an airfield used by German bombers that Soviet long-range guns destroyed the field and the nests by night firing. On the Odessa front, a fifteen-year-old girl went by night to the leader of a guerrilla detachment and told him that Rumanian troops had arrived in her village and were quartered in a schoolhouse. That same night the guerrillas tossed grenades into the school, killed twenty Rumanians, and captured motorcycles and other equipment.

The Germans testify with considerable exasperation to the effectiveness of the guerrillas. One typical report said:

For a fortnight we were busy hunting guerrillas. Planes flew over the district. Several detachments, under the command of experienced officers, combed all the surrounding forests, hills, and gullies, but did not discover any guerrilla detachments. However, subversive acts and mysterious murders are becoming more frequent. In the last ten days, they killed two lieutenants, two noncommissioned officers, and twenty privates. They caused eleven fires, the most important being a fire at the oil depot, at the provisions depot, at a flour mill, a wooden bridge, and an ammunition dump.

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No single culprit has been discovered.*

It is not difficult to imagine the weariness of carrying on war in a country where the village that was to afford relief is found to be a smoking heap of ashes, and where the sudden shock of unexpected combat keeps the nerves forever tense.

The Germans retaliate with a policy of frightfulness which is generally conceded to be more ferocious than anything they have hitherto done in the war in Europe or in Gestapo concentration camps. Prime Minister Churchill speaks of the "indescribable atrocities"; many are unprintable in nature. Details are naturally hard to check but the machine-gunning of civilians in large groups seems to be a common occurrence, and so is the use of torture to get information about guerrilla bands. Cases are alleged of the gouging out of the eyes of wounded, the torture of children in the presence of their mothers, the pulling of men and women to pieces by tying them to tanks. In a village near Bialystok an eye-witness reported having seen the bodies of five women impaled naked on sharpened stakes, with stomachs cut open and heads, lying near by in a pool of blood among the bodies of slaughtered children; they were families of Red Army commanders. Alexei Tolstoi, the well known writer, has appealed for an international commission to receive the evidence which he possesses.

Threats and torture do not seem to locate the guerrillas. In the village Nikitina near Smolensk the aged farmer Voronin was tortured to death by the German Lieutenant Mittel for refusing to reveal the whereabouts of a guerrilla band containing his three sons. During the next few days the Voronin brothers killed seven Germans and finally succeeded in shooting Lieutenant Mittel. They chalked on the house where his body was the words: "For our father and for outrages against the Soviet people." Threats and torture sometimes drive to flight whatever population remained. In the occupied town of Timkovichi an order was posted by the German commander warning the population that for every German killed "the first ten Russians we come across will be immediately shot irrespective of sex or

* U. P. dispatch, September 2, report from district near Zhitomir.

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age." The first night after the order was posted, all the town's residents disappeared into the woods.

Moscow, as befitted the Red capital, took the war in its stride. Rationing of food was accepted as a natural way of handling the situation. Shop windows were covered with crisscross blue and black ribbons to prevent shattering during air bombing; much of this taping was done in artistic designs. The streets were full of soldiers, and the city was sandbagged and camouflaged to the utmost, but there were neither demonstrations nor parades. Traffic remained normal. Telephone, lights, and water system functioned. Operas and concerts went on. The activities of sport continued, but acquired a grimmer note; a competition in throwing bundles of five hand grenades attracted considerable interest. German planes brought down near Moscow were exhibited to large crowds in the various parks. The best seller among children's books was a volume showing how to recognize various models of airplanes so that the children could tell a German from a Soviet plane by its silhouette against the sky.

Far up in the pale blue August sky, the Soviet air patrols passed back and forth, too high to be seen but giving by the measured drone of their motors a new undertone to the rhythm of Moscow life. After dark, the city became an inkspot lit only by the moon. At night, the Moscow subway, pride of the whole country, ceased normal operations and received tens of thousands of citizens into its marble halls for shelter against air raids. At night, young men in their teens, too young to be off to the front, eagerly sought posts on the house-roofs from which to hurl down incendiary bombs. One who had the luck to get twenty-one bombs in one night received a medal; his name was in the papers the following day. A British air-defense expert who went to Moscow to transmit the benefit of London experience, returned to Britain remarking that Moscow was very much better defended than London and that "to teach the Russians air defense was like teaching the New York Yankees baseball." Everybody is impressed by Moscow. Erskine Caldwell tells how the labor squads of the "People's Army" appear like magic wherever there is a bombed building to be dug into." He adds, "You hear a lot of singing as the detachments

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march, whether it is a detachment of soldiers, sailors, fire warden or a People's Army labor squad."* Ralph Ingersoll† cables: "The morale is not simply good, it is spectacular, cocky, confident, neither underestimating nor overestimating the enemy strength. The continued public admission of unfavorable news... is highly significant. Moscow is the calmest war capital I have visited."

All over the Soviet land in the rear of the Red Army war industry has speeded up to help the front. People passing through the Caucasus or through Siberia said that the characteristic they chiefly noticed was the heightened tempo of work. Despite the departure of many farmers to the front, the harvest everywhere has been reaped in record time and transported to safe places. A geographic regrouping of essential petroleum production was carried out so that all important petroleum products, including high-test gasoline, are manufactured simultaneously in several different places. Far out in the Kuznetsk coal basin, coal production reached a level never known in the basin's history; in some mines the daily output per miner went up as much as thirty per cent in the first six weeks of war. Magnitogorsk iron miners extracted scores of thousands of tons of ore "above the plan"; ore output increased nearly fifty per cent in two months. When the first shipment of American fighter planes arrived in Moscow it was found that the assembly tools would not arrive till the following boat in a fortnight. At once a squad of Russian engineers inspected the planes, decided what tools were needed to assemble them, devoted an entire factory to making the tools and got the planes into the sky within four days.

Messages from the Red Army to the war industries helped stimulate production. The pilots of one unit of the Air Force wrote to the Frunze factory saying: "We have tested your machines in action and appreciate their high quality. We have wiped out and will continue to wipe out the Nazi vultures with aircraft driven by your engines."

The Soviet press features incidents of increased productivi-

* *PM*, August 21, 1941.

† *PM*, August 25, 1941.

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ty, and thus multiplies them. In the Cheliabinsk tractor plant, a tool shop worker introduced a method of rationalization that cut the time needed for an important operation to one twenty-fourth. In the Tambov Railway car repair shops two men designed a riveting press that multiplied the labor productivity of all the riveters in the shops eight hundred per cent. In an automobile plant at Stalinabad, in faraway Central Asia, a native Uzbek mechanic speeded output nine-fold by mechanizing an operation formerly performed by hand. Far out in Siberia a foreman in a machine shop invented an automatic regulator for a lathe that increased labor productivity twenty-nine times. All these workers were featured by name for their contributions to the defense of the country.

"Defense funds" sprang up spontaneously all over the land – workers giving one or two days' earnings per month for the duration, farms giving thousands of tons of grain, butter, and meat. At the Blood Transfusion Institute in Moscow a long line of people stood offering their blood for wounded men. A group of boys from the trade schools was indignant because their blood was rejected on the ground that they were not yet eighteen.

"We are not taken for the front either," complained one of the boys. "What then are we to give?"

Behind every fighter on the front stands the organized unity of the whole Soviet land. "Everybody became nearer and dearer to one another," says a Soviet writer. "Everybody is united by one deep striving – to repulse and destroy this black pestilence in Europe." Another writes: "We know that the war will be a long one, stubborn and very bloody. But we are at home, at home in the deep snowbound stretches of our country, in the dugouts of guerrilla fighters, in our dense woods. Behind our lines are tremendous expanses, huge coal and steel centers in the Urals, oil in Baku and Ufa, millions of workers and millions of able fighters; behind the German lines is a Europe fettered in chains and eager for liberation."

It begins then to be seen what the united and valorous resistance of the Red Army means to the whole anti-Hitler coalition. The Anglo-Saxon powers have suddenly realized that, in alliance with the Soviet Union, victory is within their power.

Fifteen:

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As the Red Army writes in blood the first chapters of their resistance to the hitherto invincible German armies, new hopes begin to stir across the continent of Europe and even beyond the seas. "Russia has opened up a new pattern for victory," is one expression. "Never before in this war has there been put up against Hitler the manpower sufficient and willing to do the job."^{*}

The smoke of clamorous battle on the long Eastern Front blows into every corner of the globe – into Asia, Africa, the British Empire, China, South America, and the United States. Never before in history has so great a part of the world been involved in warfare; the National Geographic Society notes that 1,700,000,000 people – four-fifths of the world's population – are at war. These wars begin to crystallize into a common pattern. A world line-up begins to appear, including whole nations and also crossing the boundaries of nations into their internal struggles.

The Soviet people have no doubt that in fighting for their own country they are also fighting for the world's future. Stalin, in his first radio speech, said:

Our war for the freedom of our country will merge with the struggles of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for democratic liberties. It will be a united front of peoples standing for freedom and against enslavement.

A Moscow medical student gave very simply the cause for which he was ready to die: "Tomorrow I'll leave for the front. I shall fight not sparing my life for my fatherland, knowing that in this way I am fighting for the whole of future mankind, for all the men of science, for all honest working people."

For twenty-three years, the Soviet people have expected this

^{*} Raymond Clapper, August 20, from London, in New York *World-Telegram*.

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worldwide conflict, but it takes a different form from what they had most feared. They dreaded a joint attack by the armies of most of the world's nations; they feared that the world line-up would form against the U.S.S.R. This would probably have occurred if they had fought Hitler in the autumn of 1939 while Chamberlain was still in power in Britain. It would certainly have occurred if the U.S.S.R. had continued the war in Finland until the arrival of French and British troops. When the final onslaught came, twenty-two months of fighting in all the lands of Europe had profoundly modified the alignment of forces. The U.S.S.R. actually finds itself in alliance now with Great Britain and receiving war supplies from America, a situation of which, a year or two earlier, the most optimistic Soviet leaders would not have dared to dream. Due to many factors, not the least of which was the Soviet Union's own diplomacy, the world front, when it began to form, was a front against Hitler.

Outwardly the armed forces that assault the Soviet border are stronger than they were two years ago. Hitler has conquered the greater part of Europe. He possesses the industries and the farms of a continent. He can starve all Europe to replenish his war machine. Due to the lack of serious resistance in Europe – which in turn was due to the long appeasement policy of Britain and France – Hitler has seized at little cost important military supplies in all the conquered nations. The legend has grown that the German Army is unbeatable; this legend has inspired the German troops and cast despair over their conquered foes. Sir Stafford Cripps told me in Moscow toward the end of 1940 that it would be better for the Soviets to attack Hitler when he moved into the Balkans than to let him “strengthen himself” for the final attack against them. Many military observers agreed.

Stalin had a different view of it. In his first radio talk to the Soviet people he said that Nazi Germany, by “treacherously tearing up” the peace treaty and attacking the U.S.S.R., had “gained a certain advantageous position for her troops for a short period” but had “lost politically by exposing herself in the eyes of the world as a blood-thirsty aggressor.” He clearly implied that if the Soviet Union had made the first attack, important sections of the world's people who now oppose Hitler

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would have opposed the U.S.S.R. When one considers how strong the anti-Soviet forces are even today in both America and Britain, it would seem that Stalin's sense of timing and of political forces this time, too, was better than Sir Stafford's. Important political changes had been going on in Europe, which might have been checked or turned in the other direction if the Soviets had launched the war.

Hitler had gained possession of Europe's resources, but had steadily lost possession of the souls of Europe's people. At the beginning of his conquests, the vast majority of the common folk in the conquered nations really tried to adjust themselves to the German "new order." They had lost faith in the "old order"; almost anything seemed better than the endless wars it provoked. Some sort of United Europe might yet grow, they thought, from the German domination; even the excessive Nazi flavor with which it started might change from within. I heard such views expressed in Switzerland and from Swedes and Danes and Dutch in the summer of 1940 after the fall of France. Such views gave the Vichy government the support that it received.

A year of Nazi domination has showed the people of Europe what they have to expect. It is no "United States of Europe" in any conceivable sense. It is slavery, stark and utter, for all but the dominant German race. Polish peasants and workers are sold at auction to German landlords and industrialists in "slave markets" in Austrian towns. Over one hundred thousand Czechoslovaks and Carpathian Ukrainians are in Nazi concentration camps. The Serbs claim that in the first days of the German occupation 32,000 peaceful residents of one city were murdered. Great masses of population have been ruthlessly transferred. Especially among the Slavic peoples has it become clear that the Nazis intend the complete enslavement of their race. Hitler himself has stated, "We do not intend to abolish the inequality of man; on the contrary, we would deepen it and create insurmountable barriers that would turn it into law." The actuality of Hitler's system is so appalling in Poland that even some Polish landlords who had lost their estates to the Bolsheviks now say that they would prefer the Soviets to Hitler, since the Nazi rule means ruin to their entire race. This

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ripening hate of Europe's subject populations is one of the new factors that counts against Hitler as the world line-up takes form.

Equally important are the changes that the war has made in Britain and America. The ousting of the Chamberlain government and the coming to power of Winston Churchill was the outer symbol of the fact that Britain had finally been aroused to the depths against Hitler. Those appeasers who still want peace with the Nazis and an alliance with them against the Bolsheviks – they undoubtedly still exist – have lost the chief seat of power. Their aspirations have become treason in the eyes of fighting Britain. America, also, has become deeply committed as an arsenal for anti-Hitler forces, and while there are important American circles ready to welcome close tie-ups with the Nazis, especially against the Bolsheviks, they can not openly advocate this policy but have to disguise it under some form of isolationism. All of these factors are of profound importance in creating the new line-up.

The first indication of a new world line-up came when Hitler's call to a "holy crusade against Bolshevism" completely flopped in the first hours of the war. Most of the world expected Pope Pius XII to denounce the Bolsheviks; he did not do this. The speech of Winston Churchill was just as eagerly awaited; many people believed that Hitler would not have dared to invade the Soviet Union unless he had some assurance of Britain's benevolent neutrality, perhaps received through Rudolf Hess. There were doubtless important people in Britain who would have gladly called off the war against Hitler when he at last took the road they had so long wanted him to take. But if Hitler expected the British government to bless his new adventure at the outset, he was swiftly disillusioned by Prime Minister Churchill's speech:

We have but one aim, one single irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime... Any man or state who fights against Nazism will have our aid... The Russian danger is our danger and the danger of the United States, just as the cause of any Russian fighting for his hearth and

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home is the cause of free men and free people in every quarter of the globe.

In the fourth week of the war, Britain signed an alliance with the U.S.S.R. that was rapidly followed by alliances between the U.S.S.R. and the various governments-in-exile, most of whom now for the first time saw some chance of eventually going home.

"The six weeks' stand of Russia has changed the outlook of London, Washington and Europe-in- Exile," said a well-known commentator.*

More important than Europe-in-Exile is Europe-in-Prison. Even under the heel of the Nazis, this Europe begins to move. A new front has opened against Hitler in the very heart of "Hitler's Europe," where more than 200,000,000 people live under Nazi rule. It was at first only an underground front, partly spontaneous and partly directed by unknown leaders from hiding places in cellars, woods, and caves. The resistance of the Red Army to Hitler has given new strength to this movement. Throughout August and September evidence grew that Europe's underground battlefield was becoming important. In some countries, it is rapidly approaching open civil war.

In Greece, the Germans no longer sound alarms for British air raids because this sends cheering crowds to the roof tops. In Holland, waves of strikes prevent food from being taken to Germany; many munitions workers have been arrested for turning out faulty arms. On the Belgian National Day, July 21, crowds openly carried the Belgian national banner, displayed the V-for-Victory emblem, and chalked the words "traitor and gangster" on the houses of persons known to be collaborating with Germans. In Denmark, the Gestapo has been investigating the cutting of communication cables of their armed forces; the occupying troops complain that the Danes "are just like ice." In Rumania, the valves of a tank car were mysteriously opened, and oil for the war machine of Germany leaked away. Telephone lines have been cut in Norway; in Bohemia, an arms plant burned down. In Montenegro, grenades exploded, wiping

* Anne O'Hare McCormick, *New York Times*.

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out Italian patrols. In Bulgaria, the peasants formed armed groups to protect their food against German requisitions, and Bulgarian soldiers, opposing war with the Soviet Union, shouted, "Send us back home," from their tents after roll-call. Punitive detachments of Storm Troopers ravage Czechoslovakia, where the peasants are concealing grain. Near one town the peasants killed eleven Storm Troopers who had been looting. In retaliation, every tenth inhabitant was arrested and many were shot.

Seeing the golden opportunity for the smashing of Hitler, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill held a conference on the high seas and wrote "Eight Points for Peace" around which they hoped to rally the nations for an Anglo-Saxon kind of democracy applied to the world. As they returned from the conference in which they had "talked over every section of every continent," the chief worry of both heads of state was the appeasement bloc at home. The new world line-up cuts squarely across both these dominant nations. Both countries have powerful elements who would far rather help Hitler than the Bolsheviks. In America, Republican party leaders have played party politics in the hope of arousing isolationist sentiment against the "warmongering President." In Britain, important Tories in the army and the Foreign Office appear to be pressing the talk for a negotiated peace.

The man in the street in Britain has demanded a British invasion of the Continent. A Gallup poll showed that 65% of the people considered this the most immediate problem of the war. "At this critical moment when Hitler is forced to concentrate his whole striking force against Russia... when there is a ferment of unrest in every one of his conquered nations... we find ourselves... almost spectators in the war. What is the matter with us?" said an editorial in the London *Sunday Express*. The matter, in the opinion of many, was that ultra-reactionaries held high army and air-force posts.

Despite these inner frictions, both British and American foreign policy have gained new firmness from the strength of the Red Army's battle line. Great Britain's planes have flashed into action on the Arctic front in co-ordination with Soviet planes; after Molotov's stiff answer to Tokyo on the question of

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Vladivostok, the notes of the United States State Department to Japan also gained a new firmness. Soviet and British armies have moved into Iran to protect the Russian supply line – and incidentally, Mosul oil and British India – and the action was hailed in the press as the first occasion on which “the British took the initiative in time.” British trade unions have formed a joint council with the Russians. British workers, denied the outlet of the proposed invasion, expressed their feelings by a twenty per cent increase in production in the “Tanks for Russia Week.”

Both London and Moscow have made conscious attempts to give organization and form to the seething unrest in Europe. The V-for-Victory campaign and the British type of appeal has generally had its chief effect in Western Europe. In the Eastern Slavic countries, the Conference of Slavs in Moscow has won the widest response. The propaganda of the two countries is not in conflict; they supplement each other. In all the countries of Europe the Red Army's resistance, and the hope it gives that the Nazis are not invincible, is the driving force.

Stalin's radio speech seems to have reached all Europe on the day that it was delivered. In spite of German attempts to suppress it, it was posted and circulated in all the oppressed lands. Many letters of acknowledgment reached Moscow from Bulgaria. In Serbia and Croatia, the statement that the Red Army was fighting for all Europeans enslaved by fascism was especially stressed. The people of Carpathian Ukraine – the eastern tip of Czechoslovakia given by Hitler to Hungary – organized guerrillas, attacked the German airdromes on their territory and claimed to have destroyed 27 German planes, large quantities of gasoline, and many trains loaded with German troops. They sent a report about it to Moscow and added: “We consider our country as one of those territories referred to by Stalin as ‘temporarily occupied’.”

How the people in Poland learned of the Soviet-Polish alliance signed in London is unknown. The German press did not mention it and death was the penalty for listening to a foreign broadcast. But the day after the agreement was signed, the body of a commander of a Nazi Storm detachment was found in the street in Lodz. On his chest a note was pinned by a dag-

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ger reading: "The Soviet-Polish Treaty has entered into force."

Long before any actual Polish battalions could be organized in the U.S.S.R. to fight at the front, guerrilla actions spread widely through Poland itself. Soviet planes are reported to be dropping ammunition to thousands of armed Polish soldiers who had been hiding in the forests and swamps for nearly two years. A manifesto from Poland smuggled to London disclosed that more than two thousand organized groups were carrying on active opposition to the Nazi war machine. Thirteen illegal Polish daily newspapers keep the population informed about their activities. Through these channels the appeal issued by the Moscow "Rally of Slav Peoples" was posted in Warsaw and Cracow and circulated throughout the villages only a few hours after it was made. This rally appealed for unity of all the Slav peoples against Hitler, a unity based on the equality of Slav nations and not on the old Pan-Slav concept of Russian dominance. A secret Polish radio station, broadcasting from German-occupied territory, gave the Polish response.

This Rally of Slav Peoples was attended by representatives of more than a dozen Slavic nations. It was addressed by a Polish general, a Czech professor, a Montenegrin poet, a Serbian professor, a Bulgarian doctor, a Slovenian journalist, and representatives of many other nations, each speaking in his native tongue. It was only one of the attempts made from the Soviet Union to organize the European anti-Hitler front. The rabbis of conquered Vilno sent an appeal to the Jews throughout the world; a meeting of Soviet authors called upon the writers of the world to fight the "book-burning" Nazis; a congress of brilliant Soviet women summoned the women of the world to joint struggle against Hitler who deprives women of their rights. Even in the hard-pressed Crimea a meeting of Greek collective farmers sent a call to the Greek people: "The hour has struck for the great fight for freedom for the Greek people. Rise up in sacred war against the accursed fascist on your soil." Serbia has become the center of Balkan resistance. Here the continuous uprisings against the Nazis reach the proportions of active civil war, and compel a steady increase of the German armed forces in order to hold the people down. But while Germany holds the cities by her garrisons, the Serbian

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guerrillas rule in the villages. They have safe refuges in the mountains from which they descend upon scattered German posts. They are supported by the population and by many of the Serbian Orthodox priests. They are apparently well provisioned and well armed. Thousands of Serbian soldiers from the broken Serbian army fled to the hills with their weapons. According to a letter from Belgrade, published in the Moscow *Pravda* August 18, a conference of guerrilla leaders was held in the mountains of Bosnia, representing forces in Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Macedonia, Wojewodina, Montenegro, and other districts. It is estimated that there are one hundred thousand of these warriors acting in independent units but capable of uniting for common action. They have grown especially after Stalin's appeal.

Proud Paris again, as many times in history, becomes the capital of French insurrection. German soldiers in Paris are ordered to wear side-arms at all times and they stay out of the working-class districts. Despite thousands of arrests and hundreds of executions, sabotage of the German war machine increases daily. Production in airplane plants is said to have fallen by fifty per cent. The fishermen of Berck, finding that most of the German garrison had left for the eastern front, made a raid and killed 25 German soldiers. In Vichy-France, 100 members of the French Chamber of Deputies defied Petain. Their opposition is supported by both the De Gaullists and the illegal Communist Party, which, despite tens of thousands of arrests, continues an extraordinarily intense propaganda and is said to have more members now than during its most flourishing legal days.

In Norway, anti-German activity widened as soon as the Russian campaign compelled the Germans to weaken their garrisons. It grew from demonstrations to widespread sabotage and a general strike. The Germans established martial law. Norwegian guerrillas range from northern Norway across Finland and raid the German lines of communication in co-operation with Soviet guerrillas. Military observers claim that a British invasion of northern Norway would have great chance of success and would force a separate peace in Finland.

Hitler always dreaded a war on two fronts. Now he has war on a hundred fronts. On all these hundred fronts in Europe the

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Germans fight back with brutal repression. Bodies are dangling from the ends of ropes in Yugoslavia, in Poland, and elsewhere in Nazi-conquered Europe. They are bodies not of soldiers, but of ordinary people – farmers, laborers, professors, women, even priests – who felt that it was better to die fighting Hitler than to live without freedom. Everyone who died knew that his death would recruit a growing army. All of them looked to the east, where the Red Army's resistance to Hitler had given them new strength.

Indications appear that the morale of the German people is beginning to be affected by the terrible cost of the Eastern war, by the bombing of Berlin, by the unrest in the occupied lands. Trainloads of wounded returning from the Soviet front were first sent into Poland, Hungary, Austria and other countries to prevent German civilians from knowing the number of casualties. But the news gradually seeps out into every town and village in Germany and almost into every home. And news of a growing disillusionment and even despair comes back to the men at the front from their families. Usually it is not allowed to reach them; the censors succeed in stopping it, but sometimes it is brought by a returning soldier.

The Red Army has come upon large numbers of letters, sometimes in the pockets of German soldiers and more often in the censorship department at various captured German headquarters. The letters from home contain comments like this: "Every day the papers print fifteen or twenty obituaries. What is happening to you? Everything is hopeless." "The night train came in with 260 wounded. I watched them and kept thinking, where is my husband?" "Why don't those apes send you home? We are doomed and betrayed. There is only one hope; maybe everything will soon blow up on all sides." Most of the German officers and men taken prisoner or killed in August and September, 1941, kept in their pockets last wills and letters "to be sent home after my death." Earlier, in June and July, the Red Army did not find such letters.

A steady stream of propaganda from one hundred and fifty powerful Soviet radio transmitters seeks to break the morale of the German people. Its effectiveness lies in its friendliness for the German people, its individual approach, and the detail

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with which it announces German casualty lists. As follows to Frau Kraemer of Elberstadt:

Frau Kraemer, it is with deep regret that I have to inform you that your husband, Ludwig Kraemer, of the 116th Infantry Regiment, was mortally wounded. It happened as follows. Soviet troops repelled a German attack. The German regiment withdrew, leaving behind more than a thousand dead and wounded. Your husband was found with a wound in his lung. He was rushed to hospital where he died.

Frau Kraemer, we are asking you: What was your husband doing on Soviet soil? He was a locksmith and contented with his work. From the papers he left we know that he was a good soldier; he took part in campaigns in Poland, France and the Balkans and was decorated with the Iron Cross.

Frau Kraemer, we know that he was also a good husband. He died with a photograph of you and your two children in his hand. In a few days the Nazi authorities will inform you that he died for his country's honor. We are asking you, Frau Kraemer: is it honorable to break into a foreign land under cover of darkness? Is it honorable to bring destruction and death upon other people?

With such appeals, and with daily lists of German casualties, the Soviet radio tries to wear the German resistance down.

What does the battle hold for Europe, for America, for the world?

In Europe and Asia, in the Atlantic and the Pacific a war goes on which involves all the world's people. Four-fifths of them are belligerents but all of them, even the non-belligerents, help determine the war's outcome and must share its results. "We feel around us," says Churchill, "the upsurge of the slave countries of Europe... they defy Hitler's firing parties. Far away in the East we see the patient, faithful, inexhaustible spirit of the Chinese race, who too are battling for home and freedom. We are marching in company with the vast majority of mankind."

THE WORLD LINES UP

While the Soviet people offer without shrinking the lives of millions of their radiant young people – young men who have so much to live for that they cannot choose but die – while the groaning peoples of Europe move relentlessly towards the horrors of a continent-wide civil war, power over the world's future passes into American hands. And the hands are very careless hands, busy with their own games and their own grabbing. Yet they have the power, by firmly restraining Japan, to release the Soviet Far Eastern Armies; they have the power to enable Britain to open a Western Front.

Two kinds of people in America hailed the Red Army's resistance for two quite different reasons. Appeasers and isolationists see in it a chance to let the Nazis and Bolsheviks tear each other to pieces, leaving Anglo-American imperialism supreme in the world. Those who are ready to fight for world democracy soberly see in it a chance to cast our whole weight against the Nazi threat and banish it from the world forever, "a golden opportunity to be exploited with all our energy... whose full exploitation demands the immediate and vigorous action of the people of the United States. It will not last forever, nor, once lost, will it recur."*

"Our aid must become a torrent," says President Roosevelt, "engulfing this totalitarian tyranny which seeks to dominate the world.... Piecemeal resistance to aggression is doomed to failure.... We are furnishing this aid (to the USSR) as a means of defending America." It was on this basis that the first world conference on globe strategy convened in Moscow. On the initiative of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill and on invitation of Josef Stalin, the military and political representatives of three countries began the pooling of resources for a conflict on a terrestrial scale.

This is the hour on which hangs mankind's whole future. There have been other such hours, but none so decisive. For never until science and modern technique knit the whole world together could one World War decide the fate of the world. This is the battle for the world's resources and productive mechanism, which at last is capable of producing "plenty for all." This

* Major George Fielding Eliot, N. Y. *Herald-Tribune*, July 27.

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is the hour when the monster Oligarchy, whose striking fist is Berlin but whose parts live and move in all the nations, threatens to seize the world-mechanism and make all mankind the slaves of its machine. But this is also the golden hour when swift rallying of all people, organizations, and governments who hate that Nazi world of "master and serving races" can take the world's resources and mechanism in the hands of the world's people and make mankind the master of its machine.

The Soviet Union holds the last bastion. Nation after nation crumbled, less from outer attack than from inner betrayal. If Hitler can defeat the Red Army and subdue the Soviet people, or if he can even exhaust them so that they can no longer block his drive against other lands, then Nazi-fascism will sweep like wildfire through Europe, Africa, and Asia. It will leap both oceans to the American continent, striking at every government both from without and from within. In every Latin-American nation important Fifth Column attacks have been made upon government. Even in our own United States we have too many allies of fascism to be able to withstand a fascism sweeping upon us from the conquered continents of the world. Not again in our generation and not for many generations would the hope of the Peoples' Rule again arise.

But the long retreat of the world's peoples before the forces of the Iron Heel* was checked by the stand of the Red Army on on the Eastern front. That may be made the turning-point, if we seize it, in our battle for the world. If we fail to seize it, we may lose the battle for the world, or, if the world goes on to victory without us, we shall lose the battle for ourselves. If the Red Army wins, and the peoples of Europe and the peoples of China win with them, and if we Americans are not with them in the victory and the final organization of peace, then the world's Iron Heel will make its final stronghold in our country, in the land that did not resist.

One thing I know, that this is a worldwide struggle in which all who wish to share in the world's future must now immediately share. Europe's future will be settled not by gov-

* Jack London foresaw the "Iron Heel" as ruling the world for bloody, slavish centuries; he wrote before the U.S.S.R. appeared.

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ernments-in-exile. It will be settled by the acts of Europe's fighting people, who ally themselves with the great battle for the world. It will be settled by Serbian peasants whose leaders hang from gallows, by Czechs who remained organized under two years of Nazi rule, by that German pastor who spent four years in a concentration camp, by that Norwegian scientist who refused to bow to Hitler, by French workers dying today in Paris, and by German workers and farmers when they have cast off the Nazi yoke. The life of that tortured Europe is so full of brutal, transforming experience that refugees who flee from it to America say that other refugees who came three months earlier have already lost touch. I think all lose touch who do not share the bitterness of that conflict, whether they are governments-in-exile in London or American isolationists in the Middle West.

Here in our own land the line-up of our own "people's forces" has received from the Red Army's valor the greatest stimulus to united action we have ever known. I note in my lecture tour this autumn of 1941 how the descendants of Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Czechs in our industrial cities – they make up tens of millions of our people – forget the ancient feuds of Pole against Russian, and Czech against Pole and even begin to unite with the privileged sons of our early colonial Britons in the new joint hope. The chances of trade-union unity are thereby immeasurably strengthened; the conscious stage of our workers in production – especially in defense production – has increased. Persecutions of radicals have markedly lessened. If our own progressive forces rise to this opportunity and take full share in the worldwide struggle, we are on the threshold of a great expansion of freedoms in our own land.

The Soviet people have no doubt of the future. In beleaguered Moscow within sound of the guns and bombs Lena Stern, member of the Soviet Academy of Science, said to a student group:

"We are beginning our studies in days that will go down in history. The whole world is rising to fight for freedom, for civilization, for science. Mankind has taken up arms...."

THE SOVIETS EXPECTED IT

Act swiftly! History never gave man such a threat and such a chance!