

## Introduction

Joseph E. Davies was U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1936 to 1938. He was sent there by President Roosevelt particularly to see how strong Stalin's government was and how reliable an ally it could be in a future war against the fascist powers. Davies was chosen because he was an objective observer, as was recognized by the Soviets when he made fact-finding trips to different parts of that country. He wrote up his diary notes as well as his dispatches to the State Department and letters to various government officials from the time he was Ambassador, long before the war, but his book, "Mission to Moscow," was not published until 1942. The complete book is available on the internet at: [www.RedStarPublishers.org](http://www.RedStarPublishers.org). In 1943, the book was made into a full-length motion picture, produced by Warner Brothers, to encourage trust in the war-time alliance with the Soviet Union. After the war, when the Soviet Union became the U.S. government's main "boogeyman," the House Un-American Activities Committee investigated the film, and its screenwriter, Howard Koch, was blacklisted. The film is available on DVD from [www.USFriendsoftheSovietPeople.org](http://www.USFriendsoftheSovietPeople.org).

These excerpts from Davies' book concern the much maligned Moscow Trials. Davies attended the trial of Radek and others in 1937 and of Bukharin and others in 1938. (He also comments on the trial of Marshal Tukhatchevsky and other generals in 1937. This was a military tribunal and the only one of the major trials that was closed to the public, so of course Davies could not attend it.) Davies was himself a trial lawyer and watched the trials with care. He notes that not only he, but almost all the personnel of various foreign embassies who attended the trials, were convinced of the guilt of the accused.

Interestingly, he quotes one unnamed minister who also recognized the guilt of the Radek and company, but he pointed out that most of the bourgeois press had made it appear that the trial was a facade. The minister stated that "while we knew it was not, it was probably just as well that the outside world should think so."

Another fascinating point that Davies brings up is from a later diary entry, in 1941 after Nazi German had attacked the Soviet Union. He points out that while Norway had its Quislings and other countries had their collaborators with the Nazis, there were no fifth

columnists in the Soviet Union. He states that, although they did not recognize it at the time, this was because “they had shot them.”

Davies was in no way a supporter of socialism. He repeats many times throughout the book that he thinks that socialism is “against human nature,” and in the excerpts contained here he states his view that the U.S. system of justice is superior to the Soviet system. However it was not for his political and ideological outlook that he was respected in the Soviet Union, but because he looked at Soviet reality objectively. It is for this reason that we present him here.

### **Red Star Publishers**

The picture on the cover is from the film version of “Mission to Moscow” and depicts Prosecutor Vishinski (left) questioning the accused Bukharin.

From PART I  
**THE MISSION BEGINS**  
*November 16, 1936 – March 30, 1937*

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DIARY

*Moscow – January 23, 1937*

There is much excitement in the Diplomatic Corps over the fact that some seventeen old Bolsheviks are being tried before the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. here on the charge of treason against the country. They call it the “Radek Trial.” This man Karl Radek is a very well-known publicist and brilliant person, who has many friends abroad. The trial opened this morning, and I am told is being held in the Hall of the Nobles which, in the old regime, was a fashionable club of the noblesse of Moscow. At 12 o’clock noon, accompanied by Counsellor Henderson, I went to this trial. Special arrangements were made for tickets for the Diplomatic Corps to have seats. The trial lasted until 3 o’clock in the afternoon, when court adjourned to 6 P.M. I attended the evening session from 6 P.M. to 10.30 P.M. It is particularly fascinating and interesting to me. Upon the adjournment of the evening session, the newspapermen came up with me for beer and sandwiches. They all go out of their way to be helpful to me in getting oriented in this situation.

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DIARY

*Moscow – January 29, 1937*

11 a.m. – The ----- Minister, a fine old gentleman, called. He discussed his reaction to the trial. He thinks they are guilty.

12 --- ----- Ambassador called. We discussed economic development and gold reserves. He discounts some of the confessions, but thinks that they are telling substantially the truth.

1 p.m. – Went to last day of the trial. Heard Radek, Sokolnikov, Sykinsky, Serebryakov, and others make their final pleas. Adjourned at 3 p.m.

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BEHIND THE MOSCOW TRIALS

NO. 57

*Moscow, February 17, 1937*

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
THE RADEK TREASON TRIAL (JAN. 23-30)

*Strictly Confidential*

Sir,

I have the honour to report the following with respect to certain features of, and impressions made upon my mind in connection with, the recent so-called Trotsky-Radek treason trial.

#### THE IMMEDIATE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

This trial was the outgrowth of the Kirov murder of December 1, 1934. Kirov was one of the prominent party leaders of the Stalin government located in the Leningrad area, and his murder at that time created a sensation. The dispatches to the Department at that time indicated that it gave rise to great activity and concern on the part of the leaders of the government at Moscow, and that Stalin himself, Voroshilov, the People's Commissar for Defence, and other heads of the government hastened personally to the scene of the crime, apparently apprehensive that there was a widespread conspiracy to overthrow the Stalin government. The Kamenev-Zinoviev trial held in Moscow from August 19 to August 24, 1936, when sixteen defendants were arraigned, found guilty, and subsequently shot, was the outgrowth of that incident. The present trial finds its origin in the same source and by reason of revelations made at the trial and upon alleged evidence subsequently discovered.

The defendants in the present trial were seventeen in number, consisting of five or six prominent political leaders. The others were of different type – engineers, adventurers, and the like, of no particular prominence – the tools alleged to have been employed for espionage, sabotage, terrorism, and the execution of the various criminal acts. The indictment was founded upon specific criminal statutes. It charged treason against the country, espionage, sabotage, and generally the execution of terroristic activities.

#### THE CRIMINAL CODE

The statutory definitions, prohibitions, and definition of punishment are specific. These statutes have existed since January 1, 1927. An accessory is equally guilty with the executor of the crime. Even participation in any organized criminal political activity, looking to preparation of commission of any of these acts, entails the same punishment as attaches to the specific criminal act. The criminal code is predicated primarily upon the exaltation of the state. Punishments for crimes against the state are much more severe than crimes against civilian property or life. Their maximum penalty for ordinary civilian murder actuated by greed, avarice, and the like is ten years' imprisonment; whereas the maximum penalty for an offence against the property of the state is death. Another feature of the criminal law, the effects of which were apparent in this trial, is the lack of gradations of punishment. Thus, for instance, Radek's

testimony indicates that when, in 1935, after drifting for four years into what developed into a conspiracy to destroy the government, and when he had considered making “a clean breast of it” because conditions had so changed that his views were other than those which he held in 1931, he then found himself in a position where the maximum penalty had already been incurred.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE PRINCIPAL DEFENDANTS

To appraise this situation, it should be borne in mind that practically all of the principal defendants were bred from early youth in an atmosphere of conspiracy against established order. As intellectuals they had conspired against the Tsar in their youth, in their university days, and had daily faced death “on the doorstep” because of their activities up to the time of the success of the Revolution. Conspiracy was bred in the bone.

After the death of Lenin in 1924, a struggle developed among the leaders for the succession. The two outstanding contenders were Trotsky and Stalin. The former was of the brilliant, versatile, dynamic type; the latter, a Georgian, was simple, hard-working, with great capacity for work – a genius for organization and a man of great physical and mental power and an Oriental patience. As Secretary of the Communist Party, he slowly built up his party machine which resulted in the defeat of Trotsky and his final banishment in 1927. Apparently the struggle at that time was not so much a conflict of principles as a conflict of these two personalities; as is indicated by the fact that many of the things which Stalin is now projecting were a part of the Trotsky programme. This should be somewhat qualified by the fact that Stalin apparently, even in those days, was disposed to a programme of the development of the communistic idea in Russia as “*the first thing to do first*” leaving the world revolution to take care of itself, whereas Trotsky was then and is now the ardent proponent of the idea that the world revolution was foremost. During this entire period Trotsky had drawn to himself a very large number of enthusiastic adherents among the leaders in the party. These men, upon his downfall, were sent into the interior and deprived of their places in government officialdom. Some few later recanted, were taken back into the party, and were again given official position. Always, however, the cloud of suspicion hung over them. None of them were entrusted with positions of first-class importance and it is generally recognized that they never

would be so entrusted by the present authorities. Such men were the six principal defendants.

#### OTHER CONDITIONS MATERIAL TO THE SITUATION

It should also be borne in mind that it was Stalin who projected the Five-Year Plan in 1929 after Trotsky's banishment. This involved both the industrialization and agricultural collectivization programmes. During 1931 and 1932, when it was alleged the conspiracy originated, these plans were imposing terrific hardships upon the population. Conditions then were definitely much worse than in 1935. The results of the plans only began to indicate their possible successful fulfilment in 1934 and 1935. It was admitted that the Stalin regime was very much stronger in 1935 than it was in 1931. This improvement in the situation is referred to many times in the course of the testimony of the principal defendants as justification for their change of heart and final reasons for repentance and confession.

Another factor making up the background of this extraordinary trial is that Communism amounts to a religion with these men. Devotion to it is fanatical.

#### THE COURTROOM AND ATMOSPHERE

I attended the trial, which lasted six days, assiduously. It was terrific in its human drama. The sessions were held in a long high-ceilinged room, which had formerly been part of a fashionable Moscow club in the old regime. On both sides of the central aisle were rows of seats occupied entirely by different groups of "workers" at each session, with the exception of a few rows in the centre of the hall reserved for correspondents, local and foreign, and for the Diplomatic Corps. The different groups of "workers," I am advised, were charged with the duty of taking back reports of the trial to their various organizations.<sup>1</sup> Three judges, all in uniform, presid-

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<sup>1</sup> The following is an excerpt from a letter to the President, dated Feb. 4, 1937:

During the afternoon recesses, between 4 and 6 in the afternoon, I made it a point to go to various establishments, stores, and the like; and in each place were groups of 20 to 60 assembled, being addressed by some man describing the trial and the iniquities of the accused. This, I am informed, occurred all over the country, with the radio working overtime. Their political and propaganda organization extends down into every community. The lowest unit, called the "cell," consists of

ed on an elevated dais at the front of the hall. They were members of the military collegium, a part of the Supreme Court, charged with the conduct of trials of offences against the state. The dais was a part of a platform about five feet above the level of the floor in the centre of which was a well; the Witness box was a stand (about a foot high) in the well, about eight feet in front of and facing the presiding judge. In the well there were also tables for the defence counsel. On the right side of the dais sat the defendants enclosed by a plain wooden railing about three or four feet high (a kind of jury box). They sat in four rows of four chairs each facing the centre of the well. At thirty-minute intervals four soldiers were marched in under the command of an officer and were stationed on all but the well side of the prisoners' box. On the opposite side of the well, on the platform, were the prosecutor and his two assistants, one in military uniform. The court convened at noon, 12 o'clock, each day, remained in session with a thirty-minute recess until 4 o'clock. It again resumed at 6 and adjourned at 10 o'clock at night.

#### THE TRIAL

The proceedings opened with the reading of the indictment by the secretary of the court. It was a lengthy recital of alleged crimes, set forth in great detail – much evidence being pleaded. The allegations of the existence of alleged corroborative proof, in the form of written documents, created somewhat of a sensation among the journalists and diplomatic observers. Whether there was serious variance between the allegations of the indictment and the documentary proof submitted, as the trial developed, it was impossible to say, as the documents themselves were, in some instances, not produced (alleged to have been destroyed as self-incriminating), and in other instances only referred to in the course of the testimony or reserved for presentation to the military court in chambers.

Each of the defendants arose in his place in response to a question from the chief justice and pleaded guilty. The prisoners' box or *pen* was interspersed with microphones placed conveniently for their speeches. The prosecutor, with notes which were apparently signed confessions before him, asked but comparatively few questions and each defendant then gave a chronological narrative of his

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three party members charged with the organization of their particular subdivision. Jim Farley might get some pointers if he were to come over here.

criminal activities. The prosecutor conducted the case calmly and generally with admirable moderation.

There was nothing unusual in the appearance of the accused. They all appeared well nourished and normal physically. For the first few days of the trial they manifested considerable curiosity as to the crowd, and, while serious, did not seem to be much concerned. As the trial wore on, however, there became more evidence of despair in their positions – holding their heads in their hands or bowing their heads upon the rail. Generally they all seemed to listen with eagerness to the testimony of the principal co-defendants. It would appear that to many much of the testimony came as a surprise as to some of the details.

#### COMMENTS ON TESTIMONY AND PRINCIPAL DEFENDANTS

The principal defendants were Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, Serebryakov, and Muralov. Pyatakov was the first witness and stood before the microphone facing the prosecutor across the well and looked like a college professor delivering a lecture. He was the Assistant People's Commissar for Heavy Industry; was reputedly largely responsible for the success of the Five-Year Plan; and is alleged to have come of an old manufacturing family. In detail, calmly and dispassionately, he set forth the narrative of his criminal activities. As he proceeded (as was the case with the others), his testimony would be interrupted by the prosecutor who called upon different defendants to corroborate the certain specific instances which he described. In some cases they modified or disputed some fact but in the main would corroborate the fact that the crime was committed. All this was done by these defendants with the greatest degree of nonchalance. I noted particularly that after Serebryakov, who was an old railroad man, was called to his feet to corroborate the fact of a peculiarly horrible crime (which he did laconically), he sat down quite unconcerned and yawned.

Radek, the second defendant to be called, was quite a different type (short and stocky but with an aggressive and brilliant personality), and rather dominated the courtroom. He was dressed like a peasant and his personality was accentuated by a fringe of whiskers underneath his chin. His attitude was that, as a matter of course, he was one of the political leaders in the plot and that, while he had not personally participated in these specific crimes ancillary thereto, he had knowledge thereof, and assumed, and did not seek to evade, responsibility therefor. He continuously insisted, however, that



these were “man-made” crimes and constantly justified himself on the ground that they were political in character and for a cause that he had then believed in. He had several sharp colloquies with the prosecutor and did not come off second best. Throughout his testimony he gave indications of spirit; but upon his final plea to the court he asked them to remember that he it was who had disclosed the Trotsky conspiracy, with the implication that, but for him, that which the government desired to establish would not have been forthcoming. Serebryakov was as mild-mannered a pirate as ever slit a throat (with a cherubic face), who casually recited horror after horror which he had projected. He seemed more or less resigned in his demeanour. Sokolnikov, former Ambassador to London, Assistant People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, was quite a different type, with a round face, swarthy, and high forehead. He again delivered himself of what might appear to be a dispassionate lecture upon his participation in the conspiracy, and expounded logically and clearly the reasons which prompted him and his associates to launch upon a plot with Japan and Germany; the basis of which was that there was no possibility of projecting their plans for the betterment of the Russian people internally because the Stalin government was so strong that mass action within could not overthrow it and that historically they had reason to believe that their best chance was to rise to power through a foreign war and to create a smaller state out of the embers, because of the friendly disposition of the victors (Germans), and the probable attitude of other western powers of Europe in the resultant peace arrangements.

Muralov was a soldierly-looking man with a goatee, a shock of gray hair, and fine aquiline features. He was well over six feet tall, and wore a plain dark Russian blouse buttoned up to the neck. He conducted himself with fine dignity, and appeared manly and straightforward. He had at one time been in position of high command in the military forces in Moscow. There were many indicia of truth speaking in the natural manner in which he told of his reasons for supporting Trotsky as one of his oldest and best friends and a great man, who had been a man “when others were mice,” and again when he spoke of his reasons for refusal to confess, and ultimate recantation. He denied that there had been any pressure put upon him; and stated that for eight months he had refused to confess, because he resented his arrest and became angry and stubborn; that at first he thought he would prefer to die as a hero and forward

the cause in that way, but that, when he gradually understood the whole plot, he had finally concluded that the Stalin government had made much progress and was doing such great things for the Russian people that he had been mistaken, and that his duty lay in making a clean breast of it. The remainder of the defendants all testified at length with reference to their particular crimes, and were of widely different types.

All defendants seemed eager to heap accusation upon accusation upon themselves – *mea culpa maxima*. They required little cross-examination by the prosecutor. In the case of one defendant the prosecutor had even to admonish him to get down to the case and not embroider his testimony with additional crimes. The attitude of the prosecutor generally was entirely free from browbeating. Apparently, it was not necessary.

At the conclusion of the testimony, the prosecutor made a long address to the court, based in part upon evidence but largely upon extraneous historical matter. It was a scholarly, able presentation.

#### FINAL PLEAS OF THE ACCUSED

The defendant Pyatakov asked for no mercy in his final speech, nor did Shestov, who had been the chief agent for the perpetration of some of the most heinous crimes. Shestov, in fact, stated that he deserved death and wanted to die. Radek did not ask for mercy except by implication, nor did Muralov. Sokolnikov did, but in a very dignified way. The others, without exception, pleaded for mercy.

Upon the conclusion of these “last pleas,” the court took a recess and five hours later brought in its verdict.

#### JUDGMENT OF THE COURT

The defendants were all adjudged guilty and sentenced according to the degree of crime. Pyatakov and Serebryakov, as members of the anti-Soviet Trotskyite centre and as those who had organized treason, espionage, wrecking and terrorist activities, were sentenced to the supreme penalty – to be shot. Eleven others, including Muralov, as organizers and direct executors of the crimes, were sentenced to the supreme penalty – to be shot. Two, Radek and Sokolnikov, as being members of the anti-Soviet Trotskyite “parallel centre” and responsible for its criminal activities – but not directly participating in the organization and execution of the specific crimes – were sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment. Two others, Arnold and Stroilov, were sentenced to imprisonment for ten years for the specific crimes with which they were charged. The judgment

also provided that the personal property of all the condemned should be confiscated and that all prisoners condemned to imprisonment were to be deprived of political rights for a period of five years each. The clemency shown to Radek and to Sokolnikov occasioned general surprise.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

The most extraordinary part of this trial, from a Western outlook, is that there should have been such a trial at all. The accused had all entered the plea of guilty. There remained nothing for a court to do but to hear possible pleas for clemency and to adjudge the fact and sentence the accused. But here a so-called trial was held which lasted for six days and in which presumably all proof was produced that the prosecutor could possibly adduce – from our point of view an entirely useless proceeding. There were probably two purposes for this programme on the part of the authorities.

Off the record, one is admitted, to wit: that the occasion was dramatized for propaganda purposes. It was designed: first, as a warning to all existing and potential plotters and conspirators within the Soviet Union; second, to discredit Trotsky abroad; and third, to solidify popular national feeling in support of the government against foreign enemies – Germany and Japan. During the trial every means of propaganda was employed to carry to all parts of the country the horrors of these confessions. The newspapers were filled not only with reports of the testimony but also comments of the most violent and vituperative character as to the accused. The radio also was working overtime.

The other probable purpose was to disclose to the public in open court the *bona fides* of the confessions of the accused. Had these confessions been made “in chambers,” or produced over the signatures of the accused, their authenticity might have been denied. The fact of the confessions could never be disputed in the face of the oral self-accusations made “in open court.”

From reports of the previous trials the present case differed in the opinion of many observers here in that there was practically unanimity of confessions here, also greater corroboration, and a more general opinion on the part of disinterested observers that an actual conspiracy was shown to exist against the Soviet government.

With an interpreter at my side, I followed the testimony carefully. Naturally I must confess that I was predisposed against the cred-

ibility of the testimony of these defendants. The unanimity of their confessions, the fact of their long imprisonment (*incommunicado*) with the possibility of duress and coercion extending to themselves or their families, all gave me grave doubts as to the reliability that could attach to their statements. Viewed objectively, however, and based upon my experience in the trial of cases and the application of the tests of credibility which past experience had afforded me, I arrived at the reluctant conclusion that the state had established its case, at least to the extent of proving the existence of a widespread conspiracy and plot among the political leaders against the Soviet government, and which under their statutes established the crimes set forth in the indictment. There still remains in my mind, however, some reservation based upon the facts, that both the system of enforcement of penalties for the violation of law and the psychology of these people are so widely different from our own that perhaps the tests which I would apply would not be accurate if applied here. Assuming, however, that basically human nature is much the same everywhere, I am still impressed with the many indications of credibility which obtained in the course of the testimony. To have assumed that this proceeding was invented and staged as a project of dramatic political fiction would be to presuppose the creative genius of a Shakespeare and the genius of a Belasco in stage production. The historical background and surrounding circumstances also lend credibility to the testimony. The reasoning which Sokolnikov and Radek applied in justification of their various activities and their hoped-for results were consistent with probability and entirely plausible. The circumstantial detail, apparently at times surprising even to the prosecutor as well as to other defendants, which was brought out by the various accused, gave unintended corroboration to the gist of the charges. The manner of testifying of various accused and their bearing on the stand also had weight with me. The dispassionate, logical, detailed statement of Pyatakov and the impression of despairing candour with which he gave it, carried conviction. So, too, with Sokolnikov. The old general, Muralov, was particularly impressive. He carried himself with a fine dignity and with the forthrightness of an old soldier. In his "last plea" he said:

I refuse counsel and I refuse to speak in my defence because I am used to defending myself with good weapons and attacking with good weapons. I have no good weapons

with which to defend myself... I don't dare blame anyone for this; I, myself, am to blame. This is my difficulty. This is my misfortune....

The lesser accused, who were merely tools, amplified in great circumstantial detail their chronicle of crime, and in many instances gave indications that what they were then stating was being uttered for the first time. These and other facts, which I saw, compelled the belief that there may have been much redundant embroidery in the testimony, but that the consistent vein of truth ran through the fabric, establishing a definite political conspiracy to overthrow the present government.

On the face of the record in this case it would be difficult for me to conceive of any court, in any jurisdiction, doing other than adjudging the defendants guilty of violations of the law as set forth in the indictment and as defined by the statutes.

I have talked to many, if not all, of the members of the Diplomatic Corps here and, with possibly one exception, they are all of the opinion that the proceedings established clearly the existence of a political plot and conspiracy to overthrow the government.

In the Diplomatic Corps there is no unanimity of opinion with respect to the testimony with reference to the alleged Trotsky agreement with Japan and Germany. The rationalization of such plan as calmly discussed and justified by Sokolnikov and also by Radek carried weight with some, who pointed out that it was consistent with Lenin's conduct in acquiring power through the use of the German military in 1917, and the rise of the Social Democrats in Germany out of the embers of war. With others, that part of the testimony was discounted. But all agree that the state established a case of conspiracy against the present government.

The trial was quite as horrible in the impression it made upon my mind as the impression of the Constitutional Convention was inspiring.

Ever since the trial there have been constant recurring rumours of wholesale arrests of intellectuals and politically minded people in different parts of Russia, all alleged to be part of the Trotsky conspiracy. In addition to these there are wild rumours that Lenin's widow, a Marshal of the Revolution and Acting Commissar of Defence, and others in high places are imprisoned. There are also rumours which reach here from the outside that Voroshilov, the

Commissar for Defence, is marching on Moscow, that the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, has been arrested, and so forth and so on. These last two are untrue to my knowledge. Others may be exaggerated.

It is interesting to note that, at the inception of this revolution, Lenin and the other intellectual revolutionists agreed (reputedly) among themselves that they would profit by the lesson of the French Revolution and would not permit internecine struggle between themselves to breed counter-revolutions. Practically the only original Bolshevik leaders now left are Stalin, Kalinin, and Voroshilov. All the others have been banished or are dead, many "liquidated" or shot. In spite of the recognition of the danger of destruction of their ideal through ambition, human nature asserted itself here again as in the French Revolution, only the tempo here was slower.

It is the prevailing opinion here of the Diplomatic Corps, as well as that of American journalists, that the Stalin government is thoroughly entrenched in power and, in the absence of foreign war, will continue to be so for a long time.

In conclusion, I wish to say that this whole trial and surrounding circumstances shock our mentality. It is, however, a most powerful demonstration of the blessings which real constitutional protection of personal liberty affords. The right of the accused to have counsel before trial, the right to refuse to testify against oneself, and, above all, the presumption of innocence and the application of the old common-law principle that better a thousand guilty men escape rather than that one innocent man should be unjustly condemned – all these take on a very real meaning when faced with a trial such as this.

I have the honour to be, Sir, respectfully yours,

JOSEPH E. DAVIES

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INTERCESSION FOR VLADIMIR ROMM

No. 47

*Moscow, February 12, 1937*

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY OF STATE

IN RE, THE ROMM INCIDENT IN THE RADEK TREASON TRIAL

*Strictly Confidential*

Sir,

I have the honour to report an incident which occurred in connection with the Radek treason trial which, for purposes of record, should be on file in the Department.

During the course of the Radek trial, Mr. Walter Duranty of *The New York Times* came to me with a cable which he had received from a group of journalists in the United States and which reads as follows:

All members of the Washington newspaper corps have read with anxiety of the arrest of our colleague Vladimir Romm of *Izvestiya*. In our dealings with Romm we have found him a true friend and advocate of the U.S.S.R. Never once did he even faintly indicate lack of sympathy for or disloyalty toward the existing government. He did more than any other Soviet envoy to popularize the Stalin regime in this country. We hope this testimonial can be strongly certified to his judges and that you will ask Ambassador Davies also to transmit these representations.

I followed the testimony of Romm with great care. When he had concluded it was perfectly obvious that there would be impropriety in my taking any official notice of the matter at least at that time. The propriety of this attitude was unanimously acquiesced in by the American journalists here.

Attached hereto is a copy of a personal and confidential letter which I sent to Mr. Arthur Krock of *The New York Times* explaining the situation.

LIST OF ENCLOSURES:

*No. 1. Copy of letter dated January 26, 1937, addressed by Ambassador Davies to Mr. Arthur Krock.*

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

JANUARY 26, 1937

MR. ARTHUR KROCK

Dear Arthur,

Walter Duranty showed me the cable he received from members of the Congressional Press Association with a list of signatures including your own with reference to Romm's plight.

Of course my sympathies were enlisted and I watched his testimony with the deepest interest and concern.

Romm was placed on the witness stand on the day of the receipt of your message. His testimony was most extraordinary. Without prompting by the prosecutor or use of leading questions he told a chronological story very clearly and simply. He disclosed that he was an intimate friend of Radek, had received his position from the latter, and in great detail recited the manner in which, upon several occasions, he acted as "go-between" for Radek and Trotsky and Trotsky's son, Sedov, in carrying letters (sewn into the binding of

German books) back and forth. He stated that he had been an original Trotsky adherent and that from and after his conversation with Sedov in 1931 or 1932 had become part of the Trotsky organization. These letters, to which Romm and other defendants had testified, were the basis of the conspiracy charge against these defendants. They were relied upon to establish that Trotsky was plotting with those defendants the overthrow of the present Russian government, through sabotage, terrorism, assassination, and for the organization of defeatism among the population and active participation with Japan and Germany through foreign spies in the fomenting of an early war against Russia directed principally by Germany and out of which it was contemplated that the conspirators would rise to power in a new and smaller Soviet Republic, after the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the cession of the Ukraine to Germany, and the maritime states and Saghalien oil fields to Japan.

The indictment charges innumerable violations of the existing law of the Soviet Union and a typical counter-revolutionary terrorist conspiracy. Romm also stated that he had used government agencies, *i.e.*, the Tass telegraph agency, to communicate with Trotsky.

The poor devil did not leave himself a leg to stand on. He did state that since 1934 when he went to the United States he had dropped all further participation in the plans.

While his appearance on the stand was rather downcast, he looked physically well and, as far as I could judge, his testimony bore the earmarks of credibility.

Under these circumstances it made it impossible for anyone to be of aid to him in the trial.

I would gladly have done anything I could to have helped the poor chap and particularly in view of the interest of you men back home. But after all he is a Soviet citizen, knew Soviet law, and entered into the situation with his eyes open. And of course this situation here is exclusively Russian business and any interposition by me, particularly if my request were turned down, might prove embarrassing to the administration. In fact, under the circumstances, it would have been quite improper.

Immediately at the conclusion of the session I had our press correspondents, including Duranty, Deuel, Nutter, and Bess, up to the residence for a bite to eat and we canvassed the situation thoroughly. They were of one mind in the analysis of the situation as above stated.



Prevailing impressions among the correspondents here is that regardless of motives which may have prompted these extraordinary mass confessions these defendants are, generally speaking, telling the truth at least in part; and that the prosecution has made a strong case establishing the existence of a widespread Trotsky conspiracy to destroy the present government. It is the French Revolution over again.

Personally I have found great interest in following this trial and have attended each of the sessions.

If any demonstration of the wisdom and desirability of the principles of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence for the protection of the accused by the presumption of innocence, the right of counsel, the right of refusal to testify against one's self, the writ of habeas corpus, and the soundness of Anglo-Saxon law from the Magna Charta to the Bill of Rights, were required, it would be found in this proceeding. Such processes, even as the Devil spoke the truth to Christ when he said, "I know thou art the Son of God," may elicit truth sometimes, but God help individual freedom and personal rights whenever it is projected as an institution.

I am writing this to you personally and off the record.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I did not say in my letter to my friend, Arthur Krock, that I was going to take the matter up unofficially with the Soviet government because I was not quite sure of the propriety of such an action.

Henderson as usual was helpful. I discussed the matter with him and he seemed to feel that there was no diplomatic impropriety in my taking a personal matter of that kind up with the proper officials if I made it very clear that it was not in my official capacity. Pursuant to appointment I did see President Kalinin, Premier Molotov, and Foreign Minister Litvinov. "Obviously," I said, "it was the purpose of diplomatic representation in the United States and in Moscow to promote friendly relations and better understanding." I, therefore, took the liberty of suggesting to them personally and quite unofficially the desirability of giving serious consideration to the Romm matter. I elaborated upon the ability, high character, standing, and position of the American journalists and that it could not help but have a beneficial effect upon public opinion in the United States if the Soviet government could give consideration to their opinion as to Romm's fidelity to his government so far as his conduct in Washington was concerned. It was quite proper that evidence of this kind should be considered in connection with question of Romm's guilt. The suggestion was received courteously.

Sincerely yours,

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DIARY

MOSCOW—JANUARY 30, 1937

1 p.m. — The ----- Ambassador called. He is very bitter against the Soviet regime. As to the Radek trial which is the sensation of the Diplomatic Corps this week, he thinks it is all a put-up job and an internal fight among the old Bolsheviks. He believes that the confessions were induced by all manner of threats and physical police methods. He told me quite an extraordinary tale which he had just heard. He said that a Polish citizen had been arrested in the Ukraine on the charge of being a spy. The Polish Embassy, so he understood, had been unsuccessful in securing his release so the Polish government arrested two prominent Soviets in Poland. It resulted in an interchange of prisoners at the border. The Pole appeared to be a very sick man and was taken under observation and for hospitalization by Polish medical experts. They arrived at the conclusion that he had been doped unconsciously by having atropin or some such drug administered to him in his food for the purpose of weakening his will.<sup>3</sup> In his opinion this was one of the reasons

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Molotov stated that he appreciated my good intent; and welcomed my suggestions. On the other hand, he said that unfortunately the “gentlemen of the press” in Washington did not know all the facts as they knew them. He hoped, therefore, that they would defer their judgment until all the facts were disclosed. His government could make no commitment until the whole situation had been thoroughly examined. If, however, there was room for doubt they would consider with much weight the representations of the American journalists in Washington. I went away feeling that if anything could be done it would be done. Of course, poor Romm didn’t leave himself a thing to stand on after he got through with his testimony in open court.

In any event, he was not tried by public trial and I have since been informed that he was sent to do work in the interior. Ambassador Oumansky, when later I talked to him about the case, said that it was this action on the part of the American newspapermen that saved him, as “the record of Romm’s activity was very bad.”

<sup>3</sup> In a subsequent discussion of this “atropin” report, another diplomat from a neighbour country said that he would discount this story because of prejudice and hostility. He referred to Bruce Lockhart’s description of the treatment (*British Agent*) which he had received at the hands of the Gay-Pay-Oo when he was arrested on suspicion of being implicated

for these confessions at the trial. He also suggested that the reason for Romm's confession was the fact that Romm's wife and child had been induced to come into Russia and that Romm had to return to face the music because of fear of harm to them. This, he said, was pure surmise on his part. It is the first concrete statement that I have heard in connection with this general rumour as to the use of drugs – and this was hearsay and from a biased source.<sup>4</sup>

The popular celebration of sentences adjudged by the military court went on in the Red Square. This evening there was a most unusual sight consisting of crowds of enthusiastic marching men and women making demonstrations of satisfaction that “the traitors had been discovered and punished.”

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TO SENATOR JAMES BYRNES

*Moscow, February 18, 1937*

My dear Jim,

In this Radek Treason Trial, the basic vice in the procedure from our point of view was the subordination of the rights of the individual to the state. In these judicial proceedings as in some other

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in the attempted assassination of Lenin, and also cited the statements in denial of coercive third-degree measures by the defendants in these treason trials. For such value as it may have, however, here it is.

The Soviet government published English translations of the proceedings in these two purge trials which I attended. With the consent of the Foreign Office I was able to purchase fifty or sixty copies of each which I sent to various friends in the United States. It may interest the reader to know that two very eminent lawyers, one an Assistant Attorney General under President Wilson's Administration, the Honourable Charles Warren, author of the recent standard book on the Supreme Court of the United States, and the other the Honourable Seth W. Richardson, Assistant Attorney General under the Hoover Administration, told me that they had found interest in reading the proceedings with care and that each had arrived at the conclusion that no other judgment but guilty, in their opinion, could have been sustained by the evidence.

<sup>4</sup>In the Bukharin case, a year later, one of the most extraordinary features of the trial was the final plea – Bukharin's “last words.” He discussed the confessions. He had read Feuchtwanger's book, which he had found in the prison library, on the last trial, and *seriatim* he took up the various explanations or theories advanced therein, and stated that these were “all wrong. Among them was the “drug” theory.

European countries the theory is that the accused owes a duty to the state to testify after a *prima facie* case has been made.

The guarantees of the common law to protect the personal liberty of the individual from possible oppressions of government, such as the right of the accused to advice of counsel upon arrest, the right to refuse to testify against oneself, the writ of habeas corpus, the right to require that the state shall prove guilt instead of the accused being required to prove innocence – never impressed me with their beneficence in the public interest as they did in this trial. All of these defendants had been kept incommunicado for weeks and months. One by one they arose and told their story quite dispassionately and in the greatest of circumstantial detail, piling self-accusation upon self-accusation. The prevailing opinion is that, objectively viewed in the face of the proceedings, the government established its case at least to the extent of establishing a conspiracy against the present government.

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DIARY

Moscow – February 2, 1937

12 a.m. – The ---- Minister called. He has been in the U.S. and in Washington several times. Opinion re trial – guilty. Discussed the Comintern.

4 p.m. – Jenkins, American engineer, called. He is building a sheet mill in the Don Basin. Gave an interesting description of industries of that region and the Cooper Dam, second only to Boulder Dam. Described aluminium factory, sheet factories, etc. He has a high opinion of the intelligence of Russian engineers.

5.15 – Foreign Office invited us to a preview of Soviet moving pictures of our arrival and meeting with Kalinin as a “short” and a main picture – a drama – revolutionary picture.

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DIARY

Moscow – February 5, 1937

12 – The --- Minister called. In discussing trial advised confidentially that defendants, in his opinion, were guilty.

5.30 – The German Ambassador, Count von der Schulenburg, came in. He is very jolly and attractive in a fine German way. Discussed trial and plight of German prisoners arrested, to whom access was not given to German diplomatic authorities. He said that there were 40 or 50 Germans arrested or held constantly – three new arrests only yesterday. It kept him busy! He laughed scoffingly at the references in the trial to the alleged activities of Germany.

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DIARY

Moscow – February 5, 1937

Morning spent in dictation of dispatches.

12 – Visit of ---- Minister. He said purposes of trial were three: (1) local consumption, (2) foreign consumption, (3) war scare to fortify government in Soviet Union. He told an amusing story of Hitler and his reviewing troops adjacent to an insane asylum. A lunatic, when accosted by a guard, said, “No, that man is not Hitler, I am der Führer.” The Minister thought perhaps he was right.

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DIARY

Moscow – February 6, 1937

Spent a hectic morning getting off dispatches and letters in the diplomatic pouch.

12 – Called on the Lithuanian Minister – a fine old man. We discussed the trial. He stated that there was evidently a widespread plot. Stalin was still absolute master and that they had the situation in hand. Discussed the silly rumour of Voroshilov marching on Moscow current in foreign press, etc. – The equally foolish rumour that Stalin’s wife was arrested. Discussed conditions – opinion was that things were much better and next few years would show great improvement.

1 p.m. – Called on Finnish Minister.

Long-distance call from London. International News, asking about report that Voroshilov and army were marching on Moscow. Also asked the Lithuanian Minister about the atropin story. The old man didn’t credit it. He discussed at length the various theories as to why these defendants confessed. He didn’t believe that direct physical cruelties (contradistinguished with nervous cruelties) were employed and went into an extended statement of his reasons therefor. He thinks highly of this regime in many ways.

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DIARY

Moscow – February 10, 1937

12 a.m. – Conference with the --- Minister – six years here – highly intelligent, well read.

Convinced that plot existed and that defendants were guilty – discussed the fact that these defendants from their youth up, from their university days on to their exile in Europe, were steeped in the psychology of underground plotting.

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DIARY

Moscow – February 18, 1937

The --- Minister called. Re *trial*: There was no doubt but that a widespread conspiracy existed and that the defendants were guilty.

Re *European peace*: This was a critical year that was coming. The menace was not the Spanish situation but Germany and Hitler,

who was being driven by desperation and who had to fight, if at all, before England was prepared.

The U.S.S.R. wanted peace above all things else and to get it, in his opinion, would pay even the price of an agreement with Hitler. This is an extraordinary view in the face of the violent way in which Hitler and Stalin are calling each other all the vile names under the sun.

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DIARY

*Moscow – March 11, 1937*

The new Estonian Minister, Colonel Koznic, is an interesting type. We had a long conversation to-day. We get along very well together in German. He is a Russian; was educated in Leningrad and was an officer in one of the crack Tsar regiments. He was one of the group of old Tsarist military men who fought the Bolsheviks in Estonia and succeeded in establishing that state. He is still a young man with a very attractive personality and with a good deal “on the ball,” and he was particularly well informed on Russia.

His impression is that this is rather a crucial year in Russia; that there is undoubtedly a great deal of political discontent arising, chiefly out of rivalries among the old Bolsheviks. The men running the government are rather the hard-boiled, tough-fibered type of revolutionists of the Bolshevik early days rather than the intellectuals, of which latter class Trotsky was the leader. Stalin is a very strong, able man who is practical, with a lot of common sense and wisdom. Molotov is an exceptional man with great mental capacity and wisdom. Stalin’s control of the army through Voroshilov, who is unquestionably loyal, and his control of the secret police has undoubtedly firmly entrenched him in power. They seemed to be conscious of the danger to their government and could undoubtedly be trusted to take strong measures to protect their regime.

From all this, I have the distinct impression that all of the border states are scrupulously careful to offend neither of the two big boys on either side of them.

Another diplomat, Minister ---, made a most illuminating statement to me yesterday. In discussing the trial he said that the defendants were undoubtedly guilty; that all of us who attended the trial had practically agreed on that; that the outside world, from the press reports, however, seemed to think that the trial was a put-up job (facade, as he called it); that while we knew it was not, it was probably just as well that the outside world should think so.



From PART III  
THE PURGE HITS THE RED ARMY  
*June 25-July 28, 1937*

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KILLING OF THE RED GENERALS

*June 28, 1937*

THE HONOURABLE SUMNER WELLES

My dear Sumner,

Conditions here, as usual, are perplexing. The judgment of those who have been here longest is that conditions are very, very serious; the best judgment seems to believe that in all probability there was a definite conspiracy in the making looking to a *coup d'état* by the army – not necessarily anti-Stalin, but anti-political and anti-party, and that Stalin struck with characteristic speed, boldness, and strength. A violent “purge” all over the country has been going on.

The opinion of the steadiest minds of the Diplomatic Corps is that the government is not in imminent danger and is still strong; this, however, is all subject to the reservation that all depends upon whether the army has been seriously infected and weaned from the Stalin bureaucracy or not. The general impression is that it has not been, but nobody knows. It is the imponderable factor in the situation.

Last winter Eden rejected the German overtures with reference to economic aid through colonies or otherwise, unless political security were assured in Eastern as well as Western Europe. The demonstration of Russian airplanes and tanks in Spain has had a chilling effect on the German and Italian war commands. This is generally admitted.

The strength of the Red Army and the avowed and well-recognized adherence of the U.S.S.R. to peace is regarded as a distinct factor in maintaining peace in Europe. It definitely could contribute to the balance of power, and buttress the Democratic “bloc.”

Hastily yours,

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WHY THEY SHOT TUKHATCHEVSKY

*No. 457*

*Moscow, July 28, 1937*

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY OF STATE



SHOOTING OF THE RED ARMY GENERALS ON JUNE 12, 1937, AND  
GENERAL CRISIS WHICH FOLLOWED<sup>5</sup>

*Strictly Confidential*

Sir,

Several weeks have now passed since the trial and shootings of the high officers of the Red Army. It has occurred to me that it might be of some interest to you, and to the Department, to have my analysis of what happened, from the vantage of this perspective; as well as my estimate of the significance and results of these events upon the present regime.

The trial, condemnation, and execution of these officers, the flower of the Red Army, occurred June 12. Events had moved with such lightning-like rapidity and terrific tragic force that for some time it seemed difficult to obtain a well-balanced judgment on the situation. There was not only much confusion, but much violence and prejudice of opinion among the diplomatic and other observers in Moscow.

Both here and in Europe there were all sorts of rumours. Some of these were that there existed an overt plot in the Red Army to overthrow the Stalin government; that a Bonapartist coup, with Marshal Tukhatchevsky as the Corsican, had failed; that there had been established a definite agreement between these Red Army

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<sup>5</sup> In connection with this dispatch, the sequence of events should be borne in mind. The record of the Radek trial which was held in January, 1937, contained practically no reference to Marshal Tukhatchevsky or to Red Army generals. In fact when Tukhatchevsky's name was mentioned, the prosecutor went out of his way to absolve him of any possible guilt.

Immediately following this trial there were evidences of great activity on the part of the Kremlin authorities. These culminated in the shooting of the Red Army generals in June.

The Bukharin trial was not held until the following March, 1938. It was in this trial that detailed and specific charges were made for the first time against the Red Army, implicating some of its leaders in "fifth column" activities.

This dispatch was written before the Bukharin trial and while we were all in the dark. It indicates that many of us missed the real significance of these events, in relation to possible treason and collusion with Germany, which subsequent developments disclosed.

generals and the German Reichswehr to co-operate with Germany as part of an impending German *Putsch* into the Ukraine; that this was part of a larger Trotsky plot for the purpose of destroying the Stalin regime through a foreign war so that a new buffer state between the Orient and Europe might arise therefrom to save “real” communism through the aid of the Red Army; that Stalin was the “sick man of the Kremlin,” who was suffering from a hysteria complex with mental aberrations of personal danger, which resulted in these shootings of all who threatened his prominence, as he saw in them a menace to his safety; that he had severe heart trouble and was being treated by a famous Austrian physician (probably true); that his fears were being preyed upon by a group of new, ambitious members of the secret police (N.K.V.D.), who were “bending the pregnant hinges of the knee” and demonstrating their loyalty and effectiveness, ever increasingly, by constantly unearthing new alleged plots (which did not exist); that the army was engaged in a death struggle with the secret police, arising out of resentment by the army of espionage by the secret police over army officers, in connection with these political trials and the alleged Trotsky conspiracies; that the entire army was impregnated with anti-Stalin feelings, and was a hotbed of counter-revolution; that Voroshilov – Commissar for Defence – was also a suspect, and in danger of imminent execution; that the entire economic structure was demoralized by these “party purges” and was in danger of collapse; that there were mass shootings going on all over the Soviet Union on a wholesale scale; that economic breakdown with physical revolution and the overthrow of the government was imminent.

A hostile foreign press made the most of these rumours. Stories were carried to the effect that the Red Army was “marching” on Moscow; that the Red Army would probably make a demonstration in the west (Poland), in order to divert attention from its internal troubles, etc.

These rumours and theories are an indication of the feverish attitude which would naturally be incident to a situation of so tragic a kind, and which was so completely enshrouded by lack of information. Some of the reports were probably true.

#### MOSCOW VIEWS OF THESE RUMOURS

The “sick man of the Kremlin” theory is quite universally discounted. Stalin has had some heart trouble, as most of these men in the government here have had; but he has been seen on numerous

occasions, and only recently by the writer, at very close range, and he looks strong, solid, healthy, and normal.

Moreover, generally speaking, in diplomatic circles here responsibility for these executions, in a strictly personal sense, is not attributed to Stalin. He commands a great deal of respect, outside of these terrible happenings. He is generally considered to be a clean-living, modest, retiring, single-purposed man, with a one-track mind, devoted to communism and the elevation of the proletariat. The responsibility is generally attributed to the “action of the party” through its party leaders. Of course, in that connection, it is generally considered that Stalin is by far the strongest character, and he is what we might term the type of “easy boss,” who permits it to appear that his associates make their own decisions.

As to the alleged guilt of these army generals of overt acts – actual conspiracy with the German government – the general opinion is here that the charge is not justified, although it should be said that two very well-informed ambassadors, with whom I have discussed the matter, have stated it to be their belief that there was probably some truth in the allegations.

Several weeks have now elapsed and judgments have cooled. During this period I have been making an effort to probe the facts and procure the temperate judgments and opinions of people here, who are as well informed as any foreigners could be, in an effort to get a consensus as to what occurred; what is the present strength of the government and what its prospects are.

#### SURFACE APPEARANCES IN MOSCOW IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EXECUTIONS

Upon my arrival in Moscow, I found that on the face of things everything appeared as usual. There was nothing on the streets, in the traffic, or in the crowds to indicate trouble of any kind. There were no indications (as per newspaper stories) of Cossacks either camped near the Kremlin or moving about in Red Square. Very shortly after my arrival I had occasion to meet different commissars and officials of the Foreign Office and I could detect no change in their demeanour or attitude. On the occasion of a conference with Litvinov, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in connection with the discussion of the Spanish situation and European affairs, I asked him directly whether he appreciated the extent to which these events had weakened the Soviet Union as both a military and political power, in the opinion of western Europe. He stated that the Soviet

government, far from being weak, was much stronger than it had been, and that a government must be very strong indeed that could withstand the loss of so many of its leaders through punishment for treason and still go along "on an even keel," without indication of storm or stress, and continue on its way "with business as usual each day."

Underneath the surface, however, there were manifestations of the fact that a major operation of magnitude was and is going on here. Both in the local and, particularly, in the provincial press there were constant admissions of criminal trials directed against hundreds of defendants, and extensive "purgings and cleansings" of the party. These obtain in industry, agriculture, science, artistic circles, the theatre, and in fact in all phases of activity. Constant violent criticisms of different situations and specific individuals appear daily in the news columns of the controlled government press. Even more convincing are the accounts carried by word of mouth of the disappearance or arrest of this or that person, sometimes prominent, and many times unobtrusively unimportant. Oftentimes these rumours were corroborated by first-hand knowledge. There are probably many exaggerations. In my opinion, however, there is no doubt whatever but what the authorities have conducted, and are conducting, a "cleansing and purging" activity with great vigour and relentless purpose and with increasing velocity within the past few months.

The execution of these Red Army officers is a part of this general situation. The particular tragedy cannot be adequately understood or interpreted, except as a part of the whole picture.

In the course of the Radek trial, the names of General Putna and Marshal Tukhatchevsky were mentioned. Great care at the time was taken by Vyshinsky, the prosecutor, to absolve Tukhatchevsky from possible criminal complicity. Nevertheless, immediately following this trial, Tukhatchevsky disappeared. Rumours were rife that he was imprisoned, et cetera. During this period also, there was a great deal of talk that a bitter internecine struggle was going on between the army and the secret police.

#### IMMEDIATE CHRONOLOGY OF THE TRAGEDY

In the latter part of March, Tukhatchevsky returned to Moscow. Along with Voroshilov, General Egorov, and others of these defendants, Tukhatchevsky came to the Embassy in April for a dinner which I gave for officers of the Red Army. There were no particular

indications of stress as between these men at that time. Tukhachevsky had the reputation of being a very able man. He did not impress me very much. He had a rather fresh and boyish appearance, was rather overweight for his size, and looked like a man who enjoyed good living. The French Ambassador, M. Coulondre, said that he understood that Tukhachevsky's downfall could be traced partly to his indiscretions with a lady friend (alleged to be a German spy).

In April it was announced that Tukhachevsky would be one of the official representatives to the coronation of King George.

On the eleventh of May, it was officially announced that he was deposed from his command as Assistant Commissar for Defence and assigned to a minor command in the Volga district.

On the seventeenth of May, the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party decreed Soviet control over the army. Each military district thereafter was to be commanded by one military officer and two other members. This meant absolute "party control" of the army, and political dominance over military discipline and action.

On the eleventh of June, Tukhachevsky and the other defendants were arrested, charged with treason and with plotting with a "foreign state" (Germany). It was announced that they had admitted their guilt. On the following day they were alleged to have been tried, adjudged guilty.

#### COINCIDENT – PARTY ACTIVITIES – ELECTIONS PENDING

Coincident with these events were developments of a political and economic character that were interrelated with the immediate tragedy of these shootings. In January of this year, the final draft of the new Soviet constitution was ratified and approved by the constitutional conventions of the various constituent republics. It was designed to be a model constitution, providing for the protection of the freedom and safeguards for the liberty of the individual. This constitution contained other provisions that had far-reaching effects. Heretofore, for instance, industrial workers had a great advantage in their representation in government over the agricultural population. Under the old system each 125,000 peasants were entitled to one representative, whereas each 25,000 industrial workers were entitled to one representative. The new constitution changed this. All voters were placed on an equal basis and, in addition thereto, free elections were guaranteed with secrecy and the individual ballot. It was con-

templated that these elections would be held in May. They were postponed.

During the months of February and March, I was told by two different members of the Soviet of People's Commissars, or cabinet, that they were working night and day, to the neglect of their strictly official duties, in connection with party preparation for the coming elections. The Spanish Ambassador stated to me at the time that he was informed that in February and March, 1937, at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party, it was debated as to whether it was advisable to clothe the agricultural electorate with this enormous power so suddenly; that it was urged that the reason in Spain for the failure of the popular movement was the fact that leadership there attempted to give freedom and electoral equality, without first implementing their democracy through proper organization and preparation in the country districts. He stated that Stalin himself resolved this debate in favour of going ahead, on the ground that it provided a test for the capacity of the Communist Party, and that it should be met immediately and with great vigour and strength.

On March 5, at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party, Stalin's epochal speech was addressed to this situation. He berated the party for having given too much attention to economic development and too little to the welfare of the party machinery. He required that each party member become a vigilant soldier, for the protection of their ideals from capitalistic states, foreign spies, et cetera. He made a definite bid for the support of the agricultural workers and for the workers as against the factory managers and party leaders. All during the months of March and April, and even up to the present time, every vehicle of propaganda – press, radio, and popular exhortation – has been addressed to the reorganization, cleansing, and revivifying of the party organization.

By the seventeenth of May, as announced by the Moscow *Pravda*, 55% of the officials of 54,000 primary organizations scattered over the Soviet Union were elected for the first time. By the twenty-second of May, it was alleged that from 56% to 62% of the total party organization, covering tens of thousands of party organizations, had been changed and that “the party is being reconstructed”; that “the party is closer to the masses.” All this to the end that “elections do not run themselves.”

During this period also party leadership was making definite overtures to the peasants. The government press constantly was crit-

icizing local party leaders who were alleged to be oppressing the peasants of the collective farms. Prosecutions were instituted against local officials for alleged maladministration of agricultural affairs. Taxes, in kind, were being remitted to the agricultural collectives, and thereby to the individual peasants. It all had the earmarks of a political drive for the farmer vote.

#### COINCIDENT INDUSTRIAL CRISIS

Simultaneous with these political developments, there were economic conditions disconcerting to the government. The bureaucracy was responsible for the expenditure of billions of capital, in the development of these great industrial enterprises. They had made many promises of betterments and advantages to the masses, in consideration for the sacrifices which they had asked the proletariat to make. It cannot be gainsaid but what enormous results had been achieved; but by 1937 it was apparent that the machine was creaking in spots and lumbering along with difficulty in many places. Industry did not seem to function on the basis of a selfless society as well as it should, and the various devices to stimulate production, which were ingeniously projected, were only sporadically successful, and there were many indications of discontent.

The industrial production for 1936 lived up to the plan and was substantially an increase over 1935; but it began to appear that the top had been, more or less, reached and that there was danger of a recession in 1937. There was according to the press much dissatisfaction as against Stakhanovites in the lower classes of labour. That system apparently was not working as had been expected. The wage and labour problems were serious. Political activity in industry, motivated by Stalin's March speech, aggravated this situation and made conditions still worse. The press has been full of accusations, incriminations, and attacks of all kinds upon individuals, factory managers, directors, et cetera, in all classes of industry.

Still another fact aggravated this recession in the economic planned development. The threat of war had required an increase in the budget appropriations for 1935 and 1936, 15 or 20 times, respectively, of that of the budget for 1931. This was a heavy and direct load on the industrial programme. Many industries were diverted to war uses. Agricultural-machinery plants, factory plants, steel plants, and the like were turned over to the construction of tanks, airplanes, munitions of war, and the like. This again slowed down

the fulfilment of the benefits promised to the proletariat by the “powers that be.”

All of these forces were converging into the tragedy of the Red Army. The party in power, that is, the government, was confronted with several grave threats: (1) the possibility of counter-revolutionary conspiracies, plots, and assassinations within; (2) the possibility of counter-revolutionary conspiracies with Japan, Germany, and enemies without; (3) the possibility that the Trotskyists had impregnated the entire community with seeds of revolution; (4) the immediate possibility of being unable to control the electorate in the impending elections; (5) the possibility of the serious lessening of industrial output of both heavy and light industry, and, more or less, industrial disorganization.

In view of these conditions, it appears both natural and probable that the established powers, who are a strong group of men, should direct all of their energies to strengthening and solidifying their position. Self-preservation would require that they do that. Nothing solidifies a political party in power to a greater degree than the fear of foreign war and possible invasion.

#### THE ARMY AND THE PARTY

It is, of course, the fact also that the source of greatest weakness, as well as the source of greatest strength to this government, is the Red Army. It is the only factor in the equation which could immediately overthrow and destroy the government. Military observers here are practically unanimous in the belief that in point of man power and officer personnel it is a splendid organization. The most intensive tests – physical, nervous, and mental – are applied in the training and selection of its officers. It is fair to assume that under these conditions, an officer class, conscious of its own superiority, has developed in the army. It has manifested itself within the past two years in titles, insignia, rank, orders, decorations of uniforms, and the like. While the discipline of the army and its technical equipment are first-class, no one knows better than these officers that this means that the Red Army is only all “dressed up with no place to go” unless industrial conditions back of the line will support it. It has been reported that there has been much discontent, and a large amount of criticism voiced by the army against the alleged inefficiency of political heads of industry and their failure to live up to commitments in deliveries.



If, therefore, in the face of these other critical situations, the men in the government here were confronted with the possibility of a lack of allegiance in the army itself, it is small wonder that such speed and ruthlessness were employed in establishing once and for all that the army was the creature of the political bureaucracy and not its master. To charge that army generals were a party to the possibility of invasion by Germany was to mobilize the nation to the support of the government.

#### DEARTH OF FACTS AS TO THE RED ARMY PLOT

Facts are not now available, and it is doubtful whether they will be for a long time to come, which would justify a statement as to exactly what happened and just what constituted the “offence” of these officers of the Red Army. Opinion must be based largely on deductions from known facts and these are few. The press reports here are practically bare of anything, except allegations. The same applies to Voroshilov’s manifesto to the army. About all that has been stated is the position of the government, i.e., that these men were guilty of treason in the Red Army, had conspired with Germany to overthrow the government, had admitted their guilt, had been tried by the cream of the Red Army – their own peers – and that the evidence of their guilt was submitted, prior to the trials, to representative officers of all military districts of the Soviet Union. That such a conference was in fact held and that a very large number of officers were present here in Moscow at that time seem to be confirmed by foreign military observers who saw many of these Red Army officers whom they had met in different parts of the Soviet Union.

#### DEDUCTIONS FROM KNOWN FACTS

In view of the character of the accused, their long terms of service, their recognized distinction in their profession, their long-continued loyalty to the Communist cause, it is scarcely credible that their brother officers – Voroshilov, Egorov, Budenny, Blücher, and the many other district military commanders – should have acquiesced in their execution unless they were convinced that these men had been guilty of some offence.<sup>6</sup> It is generally accepted by members of the Diplomatic Corps that the accused must have been

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<sup>6</sup> The Bukharin trial six months later developed evidence which, if true, more than justified this action. Undoubtedly those facts were all fully known to the military court at this time.

guilty of an offence which in the Soviet Union would merit the death penalty.

From the facts which we have, certain deductions can be reached as to what the situation probably was. It would have been quite natural for strong-minded men, such as these men were, to have criticized political bureaucratic control of industry when it handicapped the army. It is also reasonable to assume that a group of men, such as these, would resent vigorously the imposition of an espionage system over them, through the instrumentality of a secret police system, under the control of politicians. It would also be quite natural for men of this character, and particularly this training, to have resented bitterly the possible destruction of the fine military organization which they had built up, by the imposition of political control over the military command in each military district. It is quite fair to assume that these men would not permit the party, of which they were members, to adopt this course of conduct as a matter of "party principle" without vigorous opposition. It is possible that they continued to voice such opposition.

However, if after the seventeenth of May, when political control over the army was established as a result of a party decision, the opposition on the part of these officers continued, even though it were simply through discussions among themselves, their action would be treasonable and a felony under Bolshevik rules of behaviour. It is a fundamental of party government that once a party action is established by a vote of the majority any further opposition thereto constitutes treason.

Under all of the conditions it can also be quite reasonably considered that the party leaders responsible for the conviction of these defendants had convinced themselves that these Red Army generals had outgrown their creators and were a serious threat to the party organization and dominance. It is possible also that these party leaders found but little difficulty in spelling out of the conduct of the defendants an overt conspiracy to impose the will of the army over the party, and failing therein to engage in a conspiracy with a foreign enemy to overthrow the state.

In the face of these conditions, and under this stress, Stalin and the party leaders acted with great speed and ruthless severity. They hit first. Communism is their religion and in executing speedy justice for the violation of party principle they were in the strong position of "serving the Lord." It also served their interests well, for by

such action they were entrenching themselves in power. By adding the charge of treason to the state, they became the bulwark of defence for that Russian nationalism that is being constantly stimulated by every form of propaganda available.

#### PRESENT STATUS OF STALIN REGIME

The Stalin regime, politically and internally, is probably stronger than heretofore. All potential opposition has been killed off. The crux of the situation, however, depends upon the attitude of the army. It is the army that ultimately holds the key. It is not generally believed that the morale of the army has been basically affected by those events. It is still, in the main, a communistic and party "citizen soldiery." "The party" has been insistently drilled into the youth of the army as a religion. It is probably too deeply rooted in the rank and file to have been easily destroyed. So far as the officers are concerned, they doubtless recognize realistic conditions. It has been very clearly and ruthlessly established that the party is "boss." The secret police is the personal agency of Stalin and the party. It is in the saddle and riding hard! The new head of this organization, Ezhov, is comparatively a young man. He is constantly seen with Stalin and is regarded as one of the strongest men in the government. His effectiveness and ability are greatly respected. Voroshilov, the chief of the army, is an old Bolshevik. He is generally regarded as a strong and vigorous type of man, whose loyalty and convictions would not be swayed by personal ambition. He seems thoroughly loyal to Stalin. All indications are that, for the present at least, the army is and will be loyal to the party. If so, in internal politics, the Stalin regime will be, temporarily, at least, more firmly entrenched in power than heretofore.

#### EFFECT ABROAD

The effects of these shootings have probably been more serious in their adverse effects on conditions in Europe, outside of Russia, than on conditions within the Soviet Union. There is no doubt that the confidence of France and England in the stability of a potential eastern European ally must have been severely shaken by these events.

#### CONCLUSION

Barring assassination, or a foreign war, the position of this government and the present regime looks impregnable for the present, and probably for some time to come. The danger of the Corsican for the present has been wiped out.

I have the honour to be, Sir, respectfully yours,

From PART V  
THE PURGE HITS BUKHARIN  
January 15-March 17, 1938

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OPENING SESSION OF BUKHARIN-RYKOV TRIAL

**DIARY**

**Moscow – March 2, 1938**

The treason trial of the “rightists” – Bukharin-Rykov and group – opened at the former Hall of the Nobles, now the House of Trade Unions. Each mission was confined to one ticket of admission, so I had to go to the trial without an interpreter. Seated immediately in front of the American press section, I was dependent on their translator, and their help in following the testimony. Fortunately Colonel Koznic, the Estonian Minister, who speaks English perfectly, sat next to me and gave me whispered translations. He served in the Tsarist army and was educated in Petrograd as a young man. It was difficult to look upon the prisoners in the box without shrinking. There was Krestinsky, Undersecretary of State, to whom I had presented my credentials a year ago; Rosengoltz, former Commissar of Trade, with whom I had lunched just a year ago this month at his country home; Dr. Pletnov, the heart specialist who had treated me professionally, and whom I knew quite well, and Grinko, the Secretary of the Treasury. There these men sat not more than ten feet from me in the prisoner’s box. I hope they saw in my eyes the sorrow which I felt in seeing them again under these conditions. (See Journal entries.)

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*DIARY*

*Moscow – March 8, 1938*

Again went to Bukharin trial, which I have been attending daily since it started a week ago.

Dr. Levin testified relative to coercion by Yagoda, chief of secret police, compelling him and associates to “cure to death” Maxim Gorky and his son and others, as a part of the plot to discredit the Kremlin. It was a gruesome and bizarre tale.

Beneath it runs the tale that Yagoda, one of the defendants, was infatuated with young Gorky’s beautiful wife and that Gorky Senior had aroused Yagoda’s enmity because of his interposition in that triangle. Yagoda, it was said, feared the elder Gorky because of his great popularity with the Russian people. That was in part the motive, it was alleged, for Yagoda’s action in blackmailing these physicians into a conspiracy to “cure to death” Gorky Senior (who was

suffering from tuberculosis) by prescribing treatment which would kill instead of cure.<sup>7</sup>

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*JOURNAL*

*Moscow – March 8, 1938*

Reynaud in Paris commented on the Russian trials. This trial situation, he said, was a disturbing factor when considered in connection with the difficulties of preserving peace in Europe; although, he continued, it could not be doubted that the enormous resources of that country (Soviet Union) in man power and raw materials were a factor for peace, because it was a factor in the balance of power.

This is one of the very serious effects of these trials. From the point of view of European peace, it is too bad as it discounts the real strength of this government as a reliable factor against Hitler.

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BUKHARIN TREASON TRIAL

March 8, 1938

Dear “Bijou,”<sup>8</sup>

For the last week I have been attending daily sessions of the Bukharin treason trial. No doubt you have been following it in the press. It is terrific. I have found it of much intellectual interest, because it brings back into play all the old critical faculties involved in assessing the credibility of witnesses and sifting the wheat from the chaff – the truth from the false – which I was called upon to use for so many years in the trial of cases, myself.

All the fundamental weaknesses and vices of human nature – personal ambitions at their worst – are shown up in the proceedings. They disclose the outlines of a plot which came very near to being successful in bringing about the overthrow of this government.

This testimony now makes clear what we could not understand and what happened last spring and summer. You will recall that the folks at the chancery were telling us of extraordinary activity around the Kremlin, when the gates were closed to the public; that there were indications of much agitation and a changing of the character of the soldiers on guard. The new guards, you will remember

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<sup>7</sup> Yagoda, in a later confession in open court, when he touched upon this phase, requested permission to give his testimony on these personal matters before the court sitting in secret session. So, as a matter of record, there was strictly no confirmation to these rumours but it is generally accepted here as true.

<sup>8</sup> My daughter Emlen – now Mrs. Robert Grosjean.

we were told, consisted almost entirely of soldiers recruited from Georgia, Stalin's native land.

The extraordinary testimony of Krestinsky, Bukharin, and the rest would appear to indicate that the Kremlin's fears were well justified. For it now seems that a plot existed in the beginning of November, 1936, to project a *coup d'état*, with Tukhachevsky at its head, for May of the following year. Apparently it was touch and go at that time whether it actually would be staged.

But the government acted with great vigour and speed. The Red Army generals were shot and the whole party organization was purged and thoroughly cleansed. Then it came out that quite a few of those at the top were seriously infected with the virus of the conspiracy to overthrow the government, and were actually working with the Secret Service organizations of Germany and Japan.

The situation explains the present official attitude of hostility towards foreigners, the closing of various foreign consulates in this country, and the like. Quite frankly, we can't blame the powers-that-be much for reacting in this way if they believed what is now being divulged at the trial.

Again, it should be remembered that it cannot be conclusively assumed because these facts were adduced through statements of confessed criminals that they were therefore untrue.

I must stop now as the trial reconvenes at 11 a.m. and I'll have to run.

Hastily,

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DIARY

Moscow – March 12, 1938

Went to the trial. The "last words" of Pletnov, Rosengoltz, and other defendants were harrowing in their interest and tragedy. Rosengoltz particularly so. It was only a year ago that we were at his country home for the day with Grinko, Krestinsky, the prosecutor Vyshinsky, Judge Ulrich, Mikoyan, Rosoff, and Voroshilov at dinner. I then made no impression upon some of them in stressing the dangers of foreign war as an inducement for them to pay their debt to us. The defendants in this trial, including some of these men, according to their statements wanted war! Not so Voroshilov and some of the others. He was then, a year ago, strong for the debt payment to the U.S.

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SO-CALLED BUKHARIN MASS TREASON TRIAL

No. 1039

Moscow, March 17, 1938

Sir,

I have the honour to report that this confirms cable sent in confidential code with reference to the judgment of the court in the so-called Bukharin mass treason trial.

Paraphrase of the cable is as follows:

On March 13, 1938, at approximately five o'clock in the morning, all of the defendants in the trial were adjudged guilty and the sentences were imposed. Three of the defendants were condemned to imprisonment and the remainder to death through shooting. Eight of the most prominent former members of the Soviet government, including a former premier, six former cabinet officers, one of the most prominent party leaders and member of the Politburo, and also a former president of one of the constituent republics were among those condemned to be shot. Condemned to imprisonment were a former Ambassador to England and France, a former Counsellor of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, and one famous heart specialist.

Notwithstanding a prejudice arising from the confession evidence and a prejudice against a judicial system which affords practically no protection for the accused, after daily observation of the witnesses, their manner of testifying, the unconscious corroborations which developed, and other facts in the course of the trial, together with others of which a judicial notice could be taken, it is my opinion so far as the political defendants are concerned sufficient crimes under Soviet law, among those charged in the indictment, were established by the proof and beyond a reasonable doubt to justify the verdict of guilty of treason and the adjudication of the punishment provided by Soviet criminal statutes. The opinion of those diplomats who attended the trial most regularly was general that the case had established the fact that there was a formidable political opposition and an exceedingly serious plot, which explained to the diplomats many of the hitherto unexplained developments of the last six months in the Soviet Union. The only difference of opinion that seemed to exist was the degree to which the plot had been implemented by different defendants and the degree to which the conspiracy had become centralized.

I have the honour to be, Sir, respectfully yours,

JOSEPH E. DAVIES

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FIFTH COLUMNISTS IN RUSSIA. A STUDY IN HINDSIGHT –  
1941

NOTE. – Although this was written after the German invasion of Russia in the summer of 1941 it is inserted here because this seems the logical place to illustrate how the treason trials destroyed Hitler's Fifth Column in Russia. – J.E.D.

Passing through Chicago, on my way home from the June commencement of my old University, I was asked to talk to the University Club and combined Wisconsin societies. It was just three days after Hitler had invaded Russia. Someone in the audience asked: "What about Fifth Columnists in Russia?" Off the anvil, I said: "There aren't any – they shot them."

On the train that day, that thought lingered in my mind. It was rather extraordinary, when one stopped to think of it, that in this last Nazi invasion not a word had appeared of "inside work" back of the Russian lines. There was no so-called "internal aggression" in Russia co-operating with the German High Command. Hitler's march into Prague in 1939 was accompanied by the active military support of Henlein's organizations in Czechoslovakia. The same was true of his invasion of Norway. There were no Sudeten Henleins, no Slovakian Tisos, no Belgian De Grelles, no Norwegian Quislings in the Soviet picture.

Thinking over these things, there came a flash in my mind of a possible new significance to some of the things that happened in Russia when I was there. Upon my arrival in Washington, I hastened to re-read my old diary entries and, with the permission of the State Department, went through some of my official reports.

None of us in Russia in 1937 and 1938 were thinking in terms of "Fifth Column" activities. The phrase was not current. It is comparatively recently that we have found in our language phrases descriptive of Nazi technique such as "Fifth Column" and "internal aggression."

Generally speaking, the well informed suspected such methods might be employed by Hitler; but it was one of those things which many thought just couldn't really happen. It is only within the last two years, through the Dies Committee and the F.B.I., that there have been uncovered the activities of German organizations in this country and in South America, and that we have seen the actual work of German agents operating with traitors in Norway, Czecho-



slovakia, and Austria, who betrayed their country from within in co-operation with a planned Hitler attack.

These activities and methods, apparently, existed in Russia, as a part of the German plan against the Soviets, as long ago as 1935.

It was in 1936 that Hitler made his now famous Nuremberg speech, in which he clearly indicated his designs upon the Ukraine.

The Soviet government, it now appears, was even then acutely aware of the plans of the German high military and political commands and of the “inside work” being done in Russia, preparatory to German attack upon Russia.

As I ruminated over this situation, I suddenly saw the picture as I should have seen it at the time. The story had been told in the so-called treason or purge trials of 1937 and 1938 which I had attended and listened to. In re-examining the record of these cases and also what I had written at the time from this new angle, I found that practically every device of German Fifth Columnist activity, as we now know it, was disclosed and laid bare by the confessions and testimony elicited at these trials of self-confessed “Quislings” in Russia.

It was clear that the Soviet government believed that these activities existed, was thoroughly alarmed, and had proceeded to crush them vigorously. By 1941, when the German invasion came, they had wiped out any Fifth Column which had been organized.

Another fact which was difficult to understand at the time, but which takes on a new significance in view of developments, was the manner in which the Soviet government was “bearing down” on consular agencies of Germany and Italy in 1937 and 1938. It was done in a very high-handed manner. There was a callous and almost brutal disregard of the sensibilities of the countries involved. The reason assigned by the Soviet government was that these consulates were engaged upon internal, political, and subversive activities; and that because of these facts they had to be closed up. The announcements of the trials and executions (purges), all over Russia that year, invariably charged the defendants with being guilty of treasonable and subversive activity in aiding “a foreign power” to overthrow the Soviet state.

Every evening after the trial, the American newspapermen would come up to the Embassy for a “snack” and beer after these late night sessions and we would “hash” over the day’s proceedings. Among these were Walter Duranty and Harold Denny of *The New*

*York Times*, Joe Barnes and Joe Phillips of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Charlie Nutter or Dick Massock of the Associated Press, Norman Deuel and Henry Shapiro of the United Press, Jim Brown of the International News, Spencer Williams representing the *Manchester Guardian*. They were an exceptionally brilliant group of men. I came to rely upon them. They were of inestimable value to me in the appraisal and estimate of men, situations, and Soviet developments. I had myself prosecuted and defended men charged with crime in many cases in the course of my professional life. Shapiro, too, was a lawyer, a graduate of the Moscow law school. His knowledge of Soviet law was most helpful. The other men were all very familiar with Soviet conditions, personalities, and Russian psychology. We had interesting discussions, which lasted long into the night.

All of us there in Moscow at the time paid comparatively little attention to that side of these cases. Some of us seemed to have “missed the boat.” I certainly did. There is no doubt but that, generally speaking, we were centring our attention on the dramatic struggle for power between the “ins” and “outs” – between Stalin and Trotsky – and the clash of personalities and policies within the Soviet government, rather than upon any possible German Fifth Column activities, which we were all disposed to discount at the time.

In my own case, I should have known better, for there were two facts which should have placed me on notice. They had come to my knowledge and were not known to the others. One of these occurred during an interview which I had shortly after my arrival in Moscow with an official of the Soviet Foreign Office; the other occurred before I reached Moscow, in the Berlin Foreign Office in January, 1937, during an interview which I had with a German Undersecretary of State.

The story which was unfolded in these trials disclosed a record of Fifth Columnist and subversive activities in Russia under a conspiracy agreement with the German and Japanese governments that were amazing. The gist of the testimony, which the record of the case discloses, is as follows:

The principal defendants had entered into a conspiracy among themselves, and into an agreement with Germany and Japan to aid these governments in a military attack upon the Soviet Union. They agreed to and actually did co-operate in plans to assassinate Stalin and Molotov, and to project a military uprising against the Kremlin

which was to be led by General Tukhatchevsky, the second in command of the Red Army. In preparation for war they agreed to and actually did plan and direct the sabotaging of industries, the blowing up of chemical plants, the destruction of coal mines, the wrecking of transportation facilities, and other subversive activities. They agreed to perform and did perform all those things which the German General Staff required should be done by them pursuant to instructions which they received from such General Staff. They agreed to and in fact did conspire and co-operate with the German and Japanese Military Intelligence Services. They agreed to and in fact did cooperate with German diplomatic consular representatives in connection with espionage and sabotage. They agreed to and actually did transmit to Germany and Japan information vital to the defence of the Soviet Union. They agreed among themselves and with the German and Japanese governments to co-operate with them in war upon the Soviet government and to form an independent smaller Soviet state which would yield up large sections of the Soviet Union, the Ukraine, and White Russia in the west to Germany and the Maritime Provinces in the east to Japan.

They agreed after the German conquest of Russia that German firms were to have concessions and receive favours in connection with the development of iron ore, manganese, oil, coal, timber, and the other great resources of the Soviet Union.

To appreciate fully the character and significance of this testimony, which I personally listened to, it should be borne in mind that the facts as to this conspiracy were testified to by two cabinet members of the first order, the Commissar for the Treasury and the Commissar for Foreign Trade, by a former Premier of the government, by two Soviet Ambassadors who had served in London, Paris, and Japan; by a former Undersecretary of State and by the acting Secretary of State of the government, as well as by two of the foremost publicists and editors of the two leading papers of the Soviet Union.

To appreciate its significance, it was as though the Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, Secretary of Commerce Jones, Undersecretary of State Welles, Ambassador Bullitt, Ambassador Kennedy, and Secretary to the President Early, in this country, confessed to conspiracy with Germany to co-operate in an invasion of the United States. Here are a few excerpts of the testimony in open court: Krestinsky, Undersecretary of State, said:

We came to an agreement with General Seeckt and Hess to the effect that we would help the Reichswehr create a number of espionage bases in the territory of the U.S.S.R.... In return for this, the Reichswehr undertook to pay us 250,000 marks annually as a subsidy.

Grinko, Secretary of the Treasury, said:

I knew and was connected with people both in the Ukrainian organization as well as in the Red Army who were preparing to open the frontier to the enemy. I operated particularly in the Ukraine, that is to say, at the main gates through which Germany is preparing its blow against the U.S.S.R.

Rosengoltz, Secretary of Commerce, stated:

I handed various secret information to the Commander in Chief of the Reichswehr.... Subsequently, direct connections were established by the Ambassador in the U.S.S.R. to whom I periodically gave information of an espionage character.

Sokolnikov, former Ambassador to Great Britain, stated:

Japan, in the event of her taking part in the war, would receive territorial concessions in the Far East in the Amur region and the Maritime Provinces; as respects Germany, it was contemplated to satisfy the national interests of the Ukraine.

The testimony of many of the minor defendants went to establish the fact that, upon orders of the principal defendants, they had direct connection with the German and Japanese Intelligence Services and co-operated with them in systematic espionage and sabotage; and either committed or aided and abetted in numerous crimes. For instance, Rataichak stated that he had organized and was responsible for two explosions at the Gorlovka nitrogen fertilizer plants which entailed enormous property losses as well as the loss of human life. Pushkin contributed or assumed responsibility for the disaster to the chemical plants of the Voskressensk Chemical Works and the Nevsky plant. Knyazev told how he had planned and executed the wrecking of troop trains, entailing great loss of life, upon the express directions or instructions from foreign Intelligence Ser-

vices. He also testified as to how he had received instructions from these foreign Intelligence Services “to organize incendiarism in military stores, canteens, and army shipments,” and the necessity of using “bacteriological means in time of war with the object of contaminating troop trains, canteens, and army camps with virulent bacilli.”

The testimony in these cases involved and incriminated General Tukhatchevsky and many high leaders in the army and in the navy. Shortly after the Bukharin trial these men were arrested. Under the leadership of Tukhatchevsky these men were charged with having entered into an agreement to co-operate with the German High Command in an attack upon the Soviet state. Numerous subversive activities conducted in the army were disclosed by the testimony. Many of the highest officers in the army, according to the testimony, had either been corrupted or otherwise induced to enter into this conspiracy. According to the testimony, complete co-operation had been established in each branch of the service, the political revolutionary group, the military group, and the High Commands of Germany and Japan.

Such was the story, as it was brought out in these trials, as to what had actually occurred. There can be no doubt but what the Kremlin authorities were greatly alarmed by these disclosures and the confessions of these defendants. The speed with which the government acted and the thoroughness with which they proceeded indicated that they believed them to be true. They proceeded to clean house and acted with the greatest of energy and precision. Voroshilov, Commander in Chief of the Red Army, said:

It is easier for a burglar to break into the house if he has an accomplice to let him in. We have taken care of the accomplices.

General Tukhatchevsky did not go to the coronation in London as he had planned. He was reported to have been sent down to command the army of the Volga district; but it was understood at the time that he had been removed from the train and arrested before he arrived at his command. Within a few weeks thereafter, on June 11, he, along with eleven other officers of the High Command, were shot pursuant to judgment, after a trial by military court-martial, the proceedings of which were not made public. All of these trials, purges, and liquidations, which seemed so violent at the

time and shocked the world, are now quite clearly a part of a vigorous and determined effort of the Stalin government to protect itself from not only revolution from within but from attack from without. They went to work thoroughly to clean up and clean out all treasonable elements within the country. All doubts were resolved in favour of the government.

There were no Fifth Columnists in Russia in 1941 – they had shot them. The purge had cleansed the country and rid it of treason.