

**THE CONFESSIONS OF AN INDIVIDUALIST**



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# The Confessions *of an* INDIVIDUALIST

*By*

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

“The strongest man on earth is he who  
stands most alone.”

—IBSEN, *The Enemy of the People*

“We recognize nothing higher than  
individual personality.”

—CHERNISHEVSKY

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To  
SONYA and ELIZABETH  
Companions on an Unfinished Journey

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## INTRODUCTION

*The field of autobiography* has certainly not been neglected in recent years. This is especially true as regards members of the newspaper trade. So the publication of my own life story seems to call for an explanation, if not for an apology.

I should never have commenced this work if it had not been for the encouragement of sympathetic and considerate publishers. Once fairly engaged on it, however, I found it quite pleasant. There are few of us, I imagine, who do not enjoy writing about ourselves, recalling our own pasts.

The first indispensable quality of self-description is sincerity. This I think I have preserved throughout the book. Nothing seems to me more ridiculous than affectation of any kind; and I hope this makes for a certain realism in the delicate task of describing myself. The traits of my character and personality, my tastes and interests, I think, come out quite clearly not only in the chapters which are predominantly biographical, but in those which range over a wider field. Although, since leaving college, I have followed a profession which enjoys an exaggerated popular reputation for blood-curdling adventure, I have always esteemed reflection above action and found ideas more exciting, as well as more interesting, than bombs.

Sincerity, obviously, is not enough, as anyone knows who has been cornered by a bore with an irresistible weakness for personal reminiscences. Anyone who is presumptuous enough to offer the account of his life to the world should have a story to tell and should know how to tell it. It is for my readers to judge whether I possess these qualifications.

Trying to look at my own work through the eyes of an outside critic, I would say that its chief characteristic is a certain independence of viewpoint.

The author has been an immature but earnest freethinker in a

conservative Quaker college, a classicist in a mechanical age, a pacifist during the World War, a sympathizer with bolshevism when this very imperfectly understood word was utterly anathema. Then, as a result of long residence in Russia, he became a relentless critic of communist theory and practice just when these were becoming the fashionable shrine for intellectuals to worship at. Always opposed to communism and fascism as the two wings of a revolt against liberty and individualist civilization, he has been and is firmly opposed to any American intervention in Europe's infernal cycle of war and revolution.

These attitudes will be approved or disapproved according to one's personal predilections. But to have held them all indicates a certain freedom from group and clique influence, from preconceived dogma, and conveys a certain suggestion of the lone wolf who has never hunted long with any recognizable pack. It is mainly on this basis, as a record of the impressions and experiences of an individualist profoundly out of sympathy with many of the predominant trends of the collectivist age in which it was his destiny to live that this story of an unadventurous and inconspicuous life may possess some interest and value.



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## CHAPTER ONE: *The Formative Years*

*The years between twelve and twenty* were for me decisively formative. I have now passed forty; but when I look back to the diary kept at that time I am surprised by the number of responses which it evokes. Many of my tastes and habits, some of my ideas, much of my character assumed permanent shape during boyhood and adolescence. Indeed I could wish nothing better for my old age than complete freedom to pursue and extend my boyhood readings and studies in several languages, interspersed with a liberal allowance of music and supplemented by a fair measure of travel and congenial companionship. These last two elements were lacking in my early years.

I was born in what might be called the middle brackets of American society. Our small family (I was the only child) never knew downright want; but we could not afford many superfluities. We had no savings except for a small life-insurance policy and were entirely dependent on my father's modest earnings as a newspaperman. Automobiles (then, of course, not so numerous as they are now), trips to California, full-time servants were quite beyond our means. I owe the education which I obtained at the Penn Charter preparatory school and at Haverford College to my combination of ability and luck in winning scholarships at both these well endowed institutions.

My inheritance on both sides was that of Americans who had lived in the country for a long time without either piling up fortunes or becoming derelicts. "Family trees" have never interested me, and all I know about my more distant ancestors on my father's side is that they originally settled in New Jersey and later moved

to Ohio. The racial stock was predominantly English, with a touch of German through my grandmother. My mother's maiden name was McClintock, and her forefathers were mostly Scotch, although there was a dash of French blood in the family.

My grandfather Chamberlin, for whom I was named, entered the eighty-first Ohio Regiment as a volunteer in the Civil War and rose to the rank of major. I remember him as a singularly sweet-tempered old gentleman, placid and modest and unruffled, living in retirement on the family farm in Ross County, Ohio, after a long period of service as head of the Associated Press bureau in Cincinnati. The farmers in the neighborhood used to remark on the erect ease with which he rode a horse—the result of four years of campaigning in the armies of Grant and Sherman. Typical of his character was his favorite musical selection, the Allegretto movement in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony.

My father lacked the inner peace of my grandfather. He was a man, I think, for whom the pace of American urban life was too hectic and too violent. There was a musical streak in the family; my father's sister had studied singing under Lilli Lehmann in Berlin, and my father had practiced the piano for many years under a stern and exacting German music master. He lacked confidence to undertake a musical career and drifted into the hard grind and long night hours of routine newspaper inside work, with the sensitive and easily jangled nerves of an artist.

To me he was always kind and indulgent, and from early childhood I can remember "larks" on the one night which he was free to spend at home: feasts of nuts and raisins and the chocolate and coconut candy to which I became addicted from an early age; romps and tussles; reading aloud of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* and Dickens's "*Pickwick Papers*"; drawing up lists of the ten best or worst men in history; impromptu piano recitals. As I grew older the piano gained in appeal, although I never learned to play passably. Some of my happiest hours were spent in the parlor of our house, with the old-fashioned favorite picture "*Breaking Home Ties*" hanging over the piano, listening as my father played Chopin and Liszt, Beethoven, and Schumann.

My mother was, in a sense, the Sancho Panza to my father's Don Quixote. On her fell the responsibility of vetoing attractive schemes which were out of line with the realities of our income; and her Scotch thrift helped her to keep our meager budget in

balance without too much pinching. Always gay and good-humored, she knew more people and had more friends than my father and myself taken together. As the only child I probably attracted more than a normal share of a mother's love and pride, and we were thrown together especially closely because of my father's night work. Many were the concerts, theaters and operas which we enjoyed together (free passes were one of the perquisites that helped to eke out the very low newspaper salaries of that time); still more frequent were the quiet evenings which we spent at home, reading and playing casino. My mother was always eager to help me with her excellent practical sense. It was she who saved me from an appallingly maladjusted education by learning through the pastor of her church of an open scholarship at the Penn Charter School. And many years later, when I was in Moscow, she acted as my most zealous and active press agent in bringing the manuscripts of magazine articles to the attention of editors.

In one way I am afraid I was something of a trial to my mother; I was not sufficiently "like other children." An attempt to teach me to dance at the age of seven proved a dismal failure. It is a matter of authentic record that, when the dancing teacher noticed that I was not keeping in step and asked what was on my mind, I looked blank for a moment and replied:

"Oh, I was thinking of the Russo-Japanese War."

Indeed this war between two countries where I was destined to spend a considerable part of my life is one of the first public events which I vaguely recall. For no special reason except general contrariness, since the people around me were mostly in sympathy with Japan, I was vigorously pro-Russian. A Japanese doll was put into my Christmas stocking as a joke; I threw it across the room with such violence as to break its head.

The argument that I should act, dress, think, or cheer in a certain way because other boys of my age were doing so, usually very potent for children, had no effect on me whatever. As far back as I can recall, I was insistent on following my own bent.

This trait cropped up throughout my education. I was always glad to do more than the required stint in subjects that held my interest, in Greek and Latin, literature and history, to a less extent in economics and psychology. On the other hand, natural sciences left me completely indifferent, and I sheered away from them as far as possible. Algebra I found tolerable; geometry I detested and

only passed by the mercy of a long-suffering professor. What I especially loathed was anything that required manual dexterity or accuracy.

My worst educational purgatory was a period of two years in the Camden High School. I was irresistibly reminded of this institution, with its heterogeneous mass of badly taught subjects and its complete indiscipline among the students, when I recently read, with amusement and appreciation, a scathing article on American secondary education entitled: "Three Ring Circus for Morons." My worst bugbears were the required courses in manual training and mechanical drawing. I would sometimes wake up from bad dreams of having to stay in the high-school forever because of inability to complete even a fraction of the assignments in either and I nearly cut a finger off when I let my knife slip in the manual training class. Ineptitude with my hands remained a deeply ingrained characteristic. My sole effort to learn how to drive an automobile nearly ended in disaster for myself and my companions when I persisted in turning the steering wheel the wrong way while crossing a bridge.

One worry that I never gave my parents or relatives was keeping me amused. I was fond of reading from an early age and also worked out a number of games of original solitaire, so that I never objected to being left alone for long periods of time. I called one of my favorite games "baseball with finches." Flinch was a game, now doubtless long extinct, created for the benefit of persons whose consciences were too tender to permit them to use ordinary cards. It was played with a special deck of one hundred and fifty cards, numbered from one to fifteen.

A keen baseball fan, I made each numbered card symbolize a play and amused myself for hours with games between imaginary big-league teams, keeping scores, percentages of games won and lost, pitchers' records and other paraphernalia of the sports page. During the season, thanks to a pass which my father received, I was a regular spectator at the two Philadelphia baseball parks.

But my chief source of self-diversion was books. I read and reread such childhood favorites as "Tom Sawyer," "Huckleberry Finn," and "Uncle Tom's Cabin." But I also showed a taste for heavier fare. When I was ten years old I first read Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" and enjoyed it sufficiently to make a regular practice of starting to read it through

every Christmas. The great history is still surrounded, for me, with a faint suggestion of the white grapes, stuffed dates, fudge, and other delicacies of the holiday season: for I developed quite young a persistent habit of eating while I read.

History had a strong attraction for me from the beginning, although naturally what I appreciated best was the battle descriptions and the anecdotes of individual characters. I read Green and Macaulay as readily as Walter Scott's novels, which I enjoyed all the more because of the historical associations. My favorite among these was and still is "Old Mortality," where the uncommonly vivid picture of Covenanter fanaticism conveys so much fire and passion to the story, despite the insipid figures, all too familiar in Scott, of the hero and heroine.

Children never view history as objective neutrals, and I was a staunch partisan of the Puritans and the Whigs, not unnaturally, since Green and Macaulay were my mentors. I liked to have my heroes snow-white and my villains deep black, and I still remember the sense of pained shock with which I read the judgment that "some of Cromwell's acts were more arbitrary than those for which Charles I was beheaded."

Given a taste for history, Gibbon, Green, and Macaulay were obvious authors to read. Their works could be found behind the glass doors of our old-fashioned bookcase, together with complete editions of such standard English classics as Dickens and Thackeray, Scott and George Eliot, and such lesser breeds as Bulwer-Lytton and a French writer of detective stories named Gaboriau.

But I can see no ready explanation for the great historical enthusiasm of my early teens. This was for medieval German history, more specifically for the fortunes of the House of Hohenstaufen which held the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, with one break, from 1138 until 1254. A chance reading of a history of Germany by Wolfgang Menzel, picked up in the house of a family friend, gave my imagination a start in this direction; I read eagerly what little I could find in English on the subject. One work, little known and now doubtless out of print, which I took out of the library again and again was by an English author, Mrs. William Busk, and bore the ponderous title: "Medieval Popes, Emperors, Kings and Crusaders."

I conceived quite a platonic affection for the unknown Mrs. Busk. Not only did she give the fullest English record of adventures of

the Hohenstaufens, but her sympathies were mine, with these romantic medieval Emperors and against the Popes and the Italian cities, their opponents. The whole pageant of the Middle Ages seemed to open up before me, with its Emperors standing somewhere between ancient Rome and the modern states, its papal dreams of theocracy, its crusaders and adventurers, tyrants and idealists, plagues and massacres, its cathedrals and cloisters and wandering scholars and begging friars.

But the focal point of interest remained the individual Hohenstaufen rulers, especially the two Fredericks. The first of these was sturdy old Barbarossa, who inspired the legend that he still lives, immured in a magic mountain, from which he will emerge to save the Fatherland. My leading boyhood hero was Barbarossa's grandson, the second Frederick, an enlightened despot of the eighteenth century type who appeared prematurely in the thirteenth. I was fascinated by Frederick's unmedieval indifference to excommunication, by his struggles with the Popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV, by his achievements as a lawgiver and a patron of art, letters, and science, all the more remarkable against the background of an obscurantist age. Frederick symbolized the type that has always made the greatest appeal to my admiration, the strong personality struggling against a hostile era or environment, perhaps crushed, but never broken.

It was this Prometheus type, the personality defying the brute force of mob or tyrant or prejudice or hostile circumstance, that always kindled my imagination. I was not disposed to worship what William James, with unacademic force of language, once called the bitch-goddess of material success. My boyhood gallery of admired figures included: Richard Wagner, derided and neglected during much of his life but persisting until his music won its hearing; Friedrich Nietzsche, struggling against almost unbearable physical pain to create a proud passionate philosophy that possesses much of the emotional sweep of pure poetry; Torquato Tasso, whose tormented life and final apotheosis as poet laureate of Italy are immortalized in Goethe's play and Liszt's symphonic poem. There are few melodies, even in Wagner, that compare with the triumphant surge of the climactic theme in Liszt's work. Whenever I heard it ("Tasso" was played quite often then by the Philadelphia Orchestra) I experienced the same glow as when I read the ringing words of Ibsen's Dr. Stockman, "the enemy of the people":

“The strongest man on earth is he who stands most alone.”

This early attitude of admiring the man who swam against the tide, even if he were swept away by it, predetermined my later attitude toward dictatorships where conformity is the highest virtue. It made it inevitable that my sympathy would be with the Russian professors and engineers and intellectuals in concentration camps, not with the hard-visaged gentlemen of the Gay-Pay-Oo who sent them there. And if my boyhood had fallen in postwar, not in prewar, years I am sure my modern Italian hero would have been not Il Duce, but Lauro de Bosis, the poet who flew over Rome on the mad splendid mission of urging the people to rise against fascism—and was never heard of afterwards.

Not the smallest element in the appeal of the Hohenstaufen saga was its tragic end. The last of the Hohenstaufens, the young Prince Conradin, came from Germany to claim his ancestral throne of Naples and Sicily. Defeated in battle and captured, he was beheaded by Charles of Anjou, the French ruler whom the Pope had invited to take over southern Italy. Conradin's gallant death on the scaffold at Naples moved me as strongly as a sentimental Japanese is affected when he sees a stage representation of the death of the forty-seven *ronin*, or loyal feudal retainers.

It is to my interest in the Hohenstaufens that I owe the beginning of a reading knowledge of German. There were few books on the subject in English, and I could not go on rereading the good Mrs. Busk forever. I learned that the standard work on the period was Friedrich von Raumer's "Geschichte der Hohenstaufen und ihrer Zeit." A search of the Philadelphia bookstores and libraries failed to reveal any translation of this work. So, at the age of eleven, I decided to make one myself. The history was ordered from a Leipzig publisher, and I remember the mixture of reverence and excitement with which I opened the old-fashioned, stoutly bound six volumes, each with its ribbon bookmark. Then, with something of the ardor and lack of technical experience which a youth of the Renaissance might have brought to the deciphering of a Greek classic, I set about writing down by hand a translation of von Raumer into English, with no aid except a huge German-English dictionary.

The method was clumsy and wasteful, and the first books of the translation would have barely earned a passing grade in an



examination. But I gradually acquired some feeling for the structure of the language. Von Raumer furnished much of the vocabulary which made it possible for me later to read Goethe and Schiller. The translation was put aside, a little more than half finished, when I went to college. Both the volumes of the history and the translation long ago disappeared. But some day I propose to add von Raumer's stately tomes to my library, if only as a pleasant reminder of the translation which was my first independent literary enterprise.

What was the invisible magnet that attracted me, an American boy of the twentieth century, to these German Emperors and princes of the twelfth and thirteenth, whose lives and deeds could only be seen through the dim mist of monkish chroniclers? To such a question there is no certain answer. Other Americans have strayed into fields as far removed from Broadway, Hollywood, and Main Street as Polish literature, Byzantine art, Chinese philosophy. In my own amateur medievalism there was, I suspect, an element of escapism. I instinctively shrank from the America of mechanical progress, commercial shrewdness, boisterous boosting which I saw around me. The thirteenth century was for me what the Balearic Islands (before the outbreak of the Spanish civil war) were for fugitives from the postwar economic crisis.

When I became acquainted with Wagner's music it seemed that a dream world, very unlike the prosaic everyday world of Camden, New Jersey, rose up before me like an enchanted castle. For me there was never any problem of "learning to like" Wagner. From the first hearing his music swept me away on its broad stream. There was a bridge between my German medieval interest and such operas as "Tannhäuser," "Lohengrin," and "Die Meistersinger." And the Ring, with its mystical adaptation of old Teutonic myths and legends, weaves into its rich tapestry strands from the Nibelungenlied, with the story of which I was already familiar.

Wagner was not my only musical god. Through my father's playing I acquired a still more intimate knowledge of the melodies of Chopin. Now, as then, I consider Chopin for the piano, as Wagner in opera, the supreme master, unique and unsurpassed. I read little poetry, except for the Greek and Latin classics. But I found all the romantic appeal of verse in Chopin's infinitely varied works, in the stately sweep of the Polonaises, the delicate, passion-edged rhythm of the Ballades, the tonal cataracts of the Sonatas

and the greater Etudes, the graces and melancholies of the Valses and Mazurkas.

Just about the time when I began to revel in Chopin I was reading the highly colored historical novels of Sienkiewicz, "With Fire and Sword," "The Deluge," "The Knights of the Cross." These tales of medieval Poland, with war always on the horizon and an element of the exotic East introduced through the Turks, Tartars, and Cossacks who figure in the stories seemed to supplement the appeal of Chopin. A book by the Danish critic and publicist, Georg Brandes, on the development of Polish culture and on the sufferings of the country under Russian rule made a strong impression on me. Adam Mickiewicz and other Polish poets of the nineteenth century, through Brandes' eloquent interpretation, appeared as the prophets of a romantic, oppressed people, periodically raising the banner of its lost cause in futile insurrections. And when I heard Paderewski, most magnetic of artists, speak on behalf of Poland as a prelude to a piano recital during the dark days of the war, with Poland ravaged by the armies of three powers, the cup of youthful enthusiasm bubbled over, as the following excerpt from my diary shows:

I have no hesitation in saying that I have never experienced any emotional excitement equal to that produced by Paderewski's lecture-recital this afternoon. The lecture alone, which gave me an eloquent picture of Poland's vanished glory and present misery, was enough to stir the enthusiasm; but it was followed by what was, I think, the most remarkable Chopin recital ever given in Philadelphia.

The lyric beauty of the A Flat Ballade gave a fair picture of the genius of the Polish poet who inspired the composition. Paderewski played the first two movements of the B Flat Minor Sonata with the titanic power of a Rubinstein. The fragrant beauty of the G Major Nocturne, the mournful plaint of the A Minor Mazurka led up to the glorious A Flat Polonaise, which was played with the most thrilling fire. Two encores were given (a Mazurka and the Military Polonaise); then, as a fitting climax to an afternoon devoted to Polish genius and Polish misfortune, the pianist played his country's noble anthem.

My approach not only to Wagner and Chopin but to music in general was always primarily emotional, perhaps secondarily intellectual, but never technical. For me what was important in a symphony, a concerto, a sonata was not the elements of counterpoint and harmony and musical construction, but the associations,

historical, cultural, personal, which could be read into it. This was true not only of "programme music," where the title indicates the significance of the work, but also of compositions where the clue is left to the subjective imagination. So I have always found in César Franck's noble D Minor Symphony an expression of the dignity and tranquillity of sincere religious faith, and in another favorite work, Brahms's First Symphony, an ode to resignation and constancy. The winged cavalry of Poland's Middle Ages rode again in the octaves of Chopin's A Flat Polonaise, and I discovered a rich variety of psychological and poetic messages in Chopin's more profound works (the Fantasy, the Polonaise-Fantasy, the F Minor Ballade) and in the symphonies of Tschaikovsky.

Looking back over my impressions of the many concerts and recitals which I attended over twenty years ago, mostly in the Academy of Music at Broad and Locust streets, I find that my musical tastes have remained pretty constant. My appreciation of Brahms developed more slowly than my immediate enthusiasm for Wagner and Chopin. And it was only in Russia that I came to feel the somber dramatic power of Moussorgsky or to enjoy many of the colorful operas of Rimsky-Korsakov. But my primary musical values of youth are those of middle age: Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner, Chopin and Liszt and Tschaikovsky, Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann. In a lesser but still highly cherished category I would place César Franck, Grieg, Weber, and several Russians, Moussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Rubinstein, Rachmaninov.

It seems to me that the Teutons and the Slavs have made far and away the greatest contributions to music. The Latin works (the finer compositions of Franck excepted) impress me as secondary; the record of the Anglo-Saxon countries, in comparison with their creative achievements in other fields, is a dreary waste. Some of the most abusive passages in my diary were devoted to the all-American programs which the Philadelphia Orchestra occasionally felt obliged to perform.

Both the very old and the very new in music have always left me cold. Apart from Bach and perhaps Richard Strauss and Sibelius, I should not greatly miss any music that was written before Beethoven and Mozart and after Wagner and Tschaikovsky. I am inclined to believe that in music, as in other spheres of creative thought, apart from the essentially accumulative fields of science and invention,

the nineteenth century represents the culminating peak of the present cycle of civilization.

The Philadelphia Public Library, located, if I remember correctly, on South Twelfth Street, ranked with the Academy of Music as one of two temples to which I made a weekly pilgrimage. Every Saturday after lunch I would walk down to the ferry, cross the Delaware River on the *Arctic*, the *Baltic*, or one of the other old boats which plied between Camden and Philadelphia, painfully crunching their way through the ice on cold winter days, walk up to the Library and settle down to an afternoon of reading, broken, in winter, by an excursion to Whitman's confectionery for a cup of hot chocolate with whipped cream. Toward evening there would be another adjournment for a supper of lamb chops, French fried potatoes, and biscuits. Then I would return to the Library for a final session before going to the evening concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The Library building, as I remember it, would have taken no prizes for architectural design or for interior conveniences. The air was musty, the lighting none too adequate. Yet it is with positive nostalgia that I recall the hours spent there in concentrated reading. For, without any conscious plan or guidance, I was making one exciting intellectual acquaintance after another. I owe a debt of acknowledgment to James G. Huneker's biographies of Chopin and Liszt in this connection. Gossipy and anecdotal, full of allusions to the thought as well as to the music of the nineteenth century, they pointed my way to the French and Russian novelists and to the German philosophers. A few entries in my diary for successive Saturdays in 1912, when I was in my last year of preparatory school, will give an idea of the direction of my reading, and of my reactions to it.

November 9.—I spent my afternoon and evening reading Flaubert's great novel, "Salammbô." Flaubert's Carthage, with its wealth, its pride, its cruelty and voluptuous Baal-worship, is as realistic as Bulwer's Pompeii or Sienkiewicz's Rome.

November 16.—At the Library I finished Balzac's "Deputy of Arcis" and "Salammbô." I began what promises to be a very interesting novel, Turgenev's "Rudin."

November 23.—This afternoon I discovered another very congenial author, the quaint, shrewd Gascon philosopher and essayist, Montaigne.

December 7.—In the Library this afternoon I read Byron's "Lament

of Tasso," the work which partly inspired Liszt's symphonic poem. I found the poem almost as magnificent as the music. Reading the preface to Schopenhauer's "Welt als Wille und Vorstellung," I was somewhat daunted by the formidable list of necessary preliminary works. I took refuge in Balzac's "Memoirs of Two Young Married Women."

December 14.—As the orchestra was on its western tour we missed our usual concert. I consoled myself by plunging into Kant's "Fundamental Principle of the Metaphysic of Morals." The first forty pages were much easier to understand than I had expected. I was especially pleased with his theory that the good actions inspired by the hope of heaven and the fear of hell are the product not of morality but of refined egoism and by his noble, if impracticable, idea of morality founded on pure reason alone.

Despite my gallant efforts, I do not think the more abstruse metaphysics of Kant and Schopenhauer left on me a permanent impression. I absorbed much more thoroughly the general essays of Schopenhauer and, somewhat later, the works of Nietzsche, who was perhaps the favorite author of my college years. I was delighted with Matthew Arnold's essays just because they breathed a spirit so remote from mechanical utilitarianism.

I enjoyed most the Russian and French novelists, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Balzac, and Flaubert. Turgenev especially attracted me from the first reading. If I think now of boyhood days the characters in his novels—the austere nihilist Bazarov, the wavering Rudin, who gets himself killed on the Paris barricades, the exquisite Lisa in "Nobleman's Nest"—seem closer and more real than most of the people whom I actually knew.

What I passed through in those years could be described as an unconscious process of spiritual emigration. My body was in America; my mind, for much the greater part of the time, was in some European land. I might be walking down Chestnut Street in Philadelphia, or Penn Street, on which we lived, in Camden. But there were several European cities which were closer to my imagination than Philadelphia or Camden: there was foggy, smoky London, with Dickens depicting its slums and Thackeray its clubs; there was Paris, with Balzac as the guide; there were St. Petersburg, with its palaces and cathedrals and hovels and dramshops, and Moscow of the golden domes and muddy streets—all seen through the medium of the Russian novelists. Somewhat dimmer were Rome in the splendors of the early Empire and the shadows of the Middle

Ages and the battlements of castles and spires of Gothic cathedrals and walls of the free cities of Germany and Italy.

A natural and familiar theme in American literature is the personal narrative of the European who comes to the United States as an immigrant and gradually becomes Americanized. The moods of these new citizens vary from enthusiastic acceptance to caustic criticism; but in general the story they have to tell is one of assimilation.

My own case was a curious contrast to that of the Germans, Slavs, Jews, Italians, Dutch, Danes, and others who found their way into the American melting pot. American to the core in the sense that my ancestors on both sides had been in America as long as any of our family could remember, I was drawing almost all my cultural sustenance from Europe. Books and music were the main formative influences in my life. I cannot recall any American author, much less any American composer, who exercised on me the fascination with which I was inspired by a score of European historians, novelists, philosophers, and musicians.

There was no direct contact with Europe to explain this trend of my interests. We had no friends or acquaintances across the Atlantic; we never, I think, received a letter with a European postmark. A foreign trip was more of a luxury in those days than it became after the War, and was far beyond our means. Philadelphia was not a very cosmopolitan city, and we had no friends with immediate European antecedents.

In retrospect I do not assume either credit or blame for this strongly European slant of my boyhood and adolescent cultural tastes. I could no more help being drawn to European thought and music than a future inventor could escape the fascination of steam and machinery and electrical power. In my reactions to literature and music there was an abundance of the characteristic faults of youth: extravagance, bombast, hasty and one-sided judgments. But there was no trace of affectation of the influence of some fashionable clique or coterie. Most of the authors whom I read remained purely personal possessions, so far as I was concerned; I found no one to share my new enthusiasms.

My attraction was always to Europe as a whole, not to any particular country. There is a glowing outburst in Dostoevsky's "The Brothers Karamazov" which I shall never forget after hearing Katchalov, one of Russia's greatest actors, declaim it in Moscow:

To the Russian, Europe is as precious as Russia; every stone in her is cherished and dear. Europe was as much our fatherland as Russia. Oh, even more so. It is impossible to love Russia more than I do, but I never reproached myself because Venice, Rome, Paris, the treasures of their arts and sciences, their whole history, are dearer to me than Russia. Oh, those old alien stones, those wonders of God's ancient world, those fragments of holy wonders are dear to the Russian, and are even dearer to us than to the inhabitants of those lands themselves.

There was something of this spirit in my own feelings as I took down one expression of European civilization after another from the dusty shelves of the Library.

I wish I were able to draw an adequate comparison between the America of the years just before the War and the present-day America. But here I face a double handicap. First-hand contact with America since 1922 has been limited to two fleeting visits. And as a boy and young man my eyes were fixed on Europe and the past, rather than on the America in which I was living.

One is impressed, of course, by a few obvious changes. In my boyhood years an airplane flight was thought of as a circus stunt; the radio was unknown, along with the "talkies"; the automobile was definitely the mark of a well-to-do family; the bus was not thought of as a means of long-distance transportation. Life was simpler, less distracted, more provincial. There was much less extensive and probably less informed comment on foreign affairs, and there was less creative activity in literature and the arts. At the same time there was also probably less froth and charlatanism. Histories and biographies tended to be stiffer, more conventional—in some cases, more accurate.

Perhaps the outstanding contrasts between this prewar generation and the present one lay in the former's assured faith in progress and in an underlying sense of stability which could scarcely be found anywhere in the world today. There were occasional Russian pogroms and massacres of Armenians in Turkey which aroused sympathy and protest. But Russia and Turkey seemed very far away and their regimes certainly did not offer to democratic individualist institutions the kind of sharp challenge which was later embodied in communism and fascism. There was a general faith that "the cure for the evils of democracy is more democracy," and that education could solve all social problems in the long run. There were occasional strikes and riots and periods of hard times;

conservative and radical reformers offered their remedies. But it was reform rather than fundamental change that made the widest appeal. The idea of the federal government spending billions of dollars annually in struggle with unemployment of indefinite duration would have seemed fantastic. So, in those years that seem so curiously remote and sheltered now, would have been the suggestion that millions of American troops would cross the Atlantic to take part in a European war.

I took a fair amount of interest in domestic politics. I was a hearty sympathizer with Theodore Roosevelt in his "Bull Moose" campaign of 1912 and read a considerable number of the "muck-raking" articles of Lincoln Steffens, Charles Edward Russell, and other writers of this school. The names of Huntingdon, Crocker, Stanford, the Southern Pacific Railway, and the more notorious political "bosses" of the time, all suggested original sin; and I gravely noted down in my diary for November 17, 1912, "a growing opinion that the Supreme Court is at least passively hostile to the interests of the common people."

My father was a left-wing influence on me politically. Like many other newspapermen, he had acquired the habit of "voting socialist," not because of a positive faith in Marx but because of a profound lack of faith in the "politicos" of the old parties. Our most radical friend was Horace Traubel, biographer of Walt Whitman and, like the poet, a resident of Camden. Conspicuous with his shock of turbulent white hair and proud of not wearing an overcoat even in the coldest weather, Traubel was a striking figure and a prominent member of Philadelphia's very mild political and intellectual Bohemia. He worked at night by choice and published a little private magazine which, for some unknown reason, he called "The Conservator," and which, I fear, brought him little income.

This was before the time when the dictatorship of the proletariat was thought of as practical politics, and Horace Traubel's socialism was of an expansive rather than a dogmatic character. It implied some measure of fellowship with such non-Marxian heretics as Anarchists and Single Taxers, a broad conviction that Labor is always right, cordial support of women's suffrage and feminism in general, and a liberal dose of rather vague bubbling humanitarianism. It was in the line of descent from the Brook Farm type of New England radical idealism. The bubbling humanitarianism oc-



asionally spilled over into free verse, as when we, along with Traubel's other friends, received the following message on his birthday:

I'm glad about the day I was born.  
It is the greatest of all days  
Except the day when you were born  
Or the day when anyone was born.

Traubel was an ardent apostle of his faith, an entertaining talker and was always glad to talk. But I was not converted to socialism at this time. For some reason Marx was not one of the authors whom I encountered in my intellectual roving and ramblings. I was not inclined to go beyond a general belief that the "trusts" and the "interests" were engaged in constant sinister warfare against the "common people," that there was no rhyme or reason in the differences between Republicans and Democrats, and that all politicians, except for a few personal favorites, like Theodore Roosevelt and Robert M. La Follette, were men of dubious integrity.

Foreign affairs received little attention in the American press at that time. Thanks to my fondness for history, I knew more about the England of Charles I and Cromwell and the Long Parliament than about the modern Great Britain of Asquith and Lloyd George and the Parliament Act. And I could have passed a much better examination on the policies of the Hohenstaufens than on those of the Hohenzollerns.

However, I responded quickly to the more spectacular events in Europe, such as the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913. Sienkiewicz's novels, such as patriotic compositions of Tschaikovsky as "1812" and the "Marche Slave" made me an ardent sympathizer with the Balkan states. "Who knows," I wrote on October 27, 1912, "but what the hymns of the Greek Church may once more be heard beneath the dome of St. Sophia?"

And my diary for some time registers joy over Balkan victories, accompanied, on one occasion, by expression of the hope that Austria-Hungary might disappear from the map of Europe. My interest in Balkan wars and politics, however, faded away when the victorious powers displayed an unregenerate tendency to fight over the spoils of victory.

The two most fortunate accidents in my life, I think, were my

transfer from the Camden High School to the Penn Charter School, in Philadelphia, and my appointment as correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor* in Moscow. The first extricated me from an educational blind alley and opened the way for six years of congenial study along classical lines, accompanied by un-systematic but extensive outside reading. The second, as will be shown later, got me out of a blind alley in later life.

Penn Charter, a Friends' school, led up naturally to Haverford, a Friends' college, located in a pleasant suburban district of Philadelphia. Haverford, a small college with a strong emphasis on liberal arts courses, was admirably suited to my tastes, and I look back to the four years which I spent there as among the happiest in my life. Haverford was a men's college, with a student body at that time of about 200, ivy-clad dormitories, and a rather strongly marked English influence, which was preserved in part through the close contacts between American and British Friends. I think it was the only American college which maintained a cricket team.

"Thee" and "thou" were the regular forms of address to the students employed by President Sharpless and other Friends on the faculty. The small size of Haverford and its severe entrance requirements tended to keep out the hordes of cretins and loafers who make "higher education" such a misleading term when applied to many American universities and colleges. The silly sides of American collegiate life were reduced to a minimum. There were no fraternities, and there was little snobbishness.

The students were much more homogeneous than they would have been in a larger institution, located near a more cosmopolitan city. The great majority came from middle-class families in Pennsylvania and neighboring Eastern states, with only a small sprinkling of Westerners. There were a few scions of families which had done well out of the ownership of Philadelphia stores and businesses and New England textile mills. But the majority of my classmates were about in my own economic position, able to attend the college with help from scholarships or outside work, but faced with the necessity of earning their own livings as soon as they received their diplomas.

A few foreigners added variety to the rather sober gray pattern of the student body. I became acquainted with two Japanese whom I would meet twenty years later in Tokyo. One of these, now dead,

was Yoshio Nitobe, adopted son of the well known scholar and publicist, Inazo Nitobe. He was editor of the college magazine, the *Haverfordian*, to which I became a persistent contributor. The other was Iwao Ayusawa, for many years head of the Tokyo branch of the International Labor Office. There were also two or three English students, a Chinese whom I later met as head of a university in Shanghai, and a very bright and un-Quakerlike young European who bore the international name of Jacques George Clemenceau Schumann LeClerq and also became a pillar of the magazine.

The two foremost personalities at Haverford in my time were the senior Professor of English, the late Dr. Francis Barton Gummere, and Dr. Rufus M. Jones, professor of philosophy. "F. B.," as Dr. Gummere was affectionately and admiringly called by the students who crowded his elective courses in Shakespeare, Milton, and Chaucer, was a famous research student in the field of the early English ballad. And, as anyone who has heard his lectures could testify, he possessed the warm feeling for great drama and poetry and thought which distinguishes the true scholar from the pedant. To hear him let himself go in declaiming John of Gaunt's apostrophe to England or Milton's "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints" or the tribute of Lucretius to the free-thinking Epicurus was an experience quite apart from the routine run of college lectures. It was rather to be compared with Chaliapin's dramatic singing of "The Two Grenadiers."

Rufus Jones was an authority on early Quaker history whose own faith was shot through with a mild mysticism. His basic ideas were far from those of the thinkers who had most influence on me in my formative years. But no one could come into contact with Dr. Jones without being impressed by the simple, straightforward, unassuming kindness and goodness of his character. It was these qualities, combined with a measure of the proverbial hardheaded Quaker common sense, that made him an excellent head of the American Friends Service Committee that did so much admirable work in bringing relief, with absolute impartiality, to the victims of war and postwar hates and famines and persecutions.

My last meeting with Rufus Jones was in Tokyo in 1938, and I think a characteristic touch of the man's spirit, with its compound of idealism and not unhumorous realism, was expressed in an informal talk which he gave in Tokyo, when he said (I quote from memory):

"It is part of our belief that there is something of God in every man. I know there are some people in whom it would require a *tremendous* act of faith to see even a trace of the divine. But it is there just the same."

President Isaac Sharpless ("Uncle Ike," as he was privately called by the students) was also a distinctive personality, although, in my role of a young rebel and iconoclast, I did not fully appreciate this while I was at Haverford. A shrewd, capable executive rather than a scholar, he governed his little academic empire in a spirit of benevolent paternalism and tried to make the writ of the Ten Commandments and the virtues of Poor Richard prevail among the students. Not infrequently he sweetened his moralistic pills with a coating of dry humor. This humor, together with a certain natural diplomacy in handling men which went hand in hand with a plain, blunt Friendly method of address, enabled him to pass the ordeal of complicated relationships with trustees, alumni, faculty, and students with less friction than most college presidents experience.

My first introduction to President Sharpless occurred when he addressed us assembled freshmen in the main auditorium and warned us that we should be exposed to five major temptations: "drinking, smoking, gambling, loafing, and — er — immorality." He added that fourteen of the sixteen men with highest grades in the college were nonsmokers, "which seems to show," he added, "either that smoking injures the brain or that an inferior type of mind takes to tobacco."

Once, while he was delivering a lecture on practical ethics to our senior class, he noticed that one of its more easy-going members had put up his feet on an empty bench in front of him. Without changing his grave measured tone of voice or moving a muscle of his face, President Sharpless interjected, "I'd rather see thy face than the sole of thy foot, Shepard," and went on with his discourse while the feet came down with a clatter and the class rocked with more or less suppressed laughter.

The mailed fist which President Sharpless carried within the velvet glove was perhaps seen to best advantage when he was called on to crush an unusual infidel revolt in Fifth Day Meeting, as the regular Thursday gathering in the Haverford meeting-house was called, attendance at which was then compulsory for students. The leader of this mutiny was a student whom I shall name Smith, since he may now, for all I know, be an elder in some

church. At that time he was a genial fellow of burly build, and his chief characteristics were a deep bass voice, a fondness for polysyllabic words, and an unquenchable delight in airing the atheistic views of himself, his father, his brother, and his uncle to all who would listen to him. He was one of Haverford's few nonconformist students, and the severe and conventionally minded Dean privately characterized both Smith and myself as "abnormal."

One day Smith was engaged in his familiar occupation of complaining about the obligation to attend meeting. "It's a positive insult to a man of my intelligence," he boomed. Some one, in a spirit of Mephistophelian mischief, suggested that, as anyone was theoretically free to speak in a Friends' meeting, the meetinghouse itself would be the proper forum in which to voice his grievance. After a moment of hesitation and canny consideration Smith accepted the suggestion on condition that he would receive fifteen dollars—the sum necessary to take him home as a result of his experiment in free speech.

The fifteen dollars was quickly subscribed (partly in the form of canceled poker I O U's); the news spread like wildfire through the dormitories of the college and did not escape the knowledge of the college authorities' unobtrusive but efficient intelligence service. Smith set about energetically preparing a flamboyant speech, which, by coincidence, was to be delivered on Washington's Birthday. As a peroration he had worked out a modest comparison between himself, "standing up for religious liberty," and George Washington, "standing up for political liberty." The fateful day arrived, and it is safe to say that attendance at meeting was never so full or so voluntary. One could have heard the proverbial pin drop in the expectant silence when Smith rose under the cold accusing eyes of President Sharpless, the Dean, "Uncle Allen," the college librarian, and other academic dignitaries and began as follows:

"For some time I have thought of addressing this meeting. I am not rising in any spirit of fear and trepidation . . ."

When the many-syllabled "trepidation" rolled out, President Sharpless decided that matters had gone far enough. He stood up and deliberately said:

"I think, Smith, thee had better sit down."

The revolt was suppressed, and in such a way as to turn the laugh on the rebel. "I think thee had better sit down" became a

college byword. Smith was not expelled, but his scholarship was not renewed after a year in which he added to his dossier of discredit by becoming involved in a theological polemic with Dr. Henry Hallam Tweedy, an inspirational speaker who had been imported by the Y.M.C.A.

I was not such an embattled crusader for infidelity as the redoubtable Smith. But, nourished on nineteenth century skeptics and romantics, I was destined to be an iconoclast in the placid conservative atmosphere of Haverford. My entrance into college coincided with the development of an urge to write. Hitherto my sole effort in this direction, apart from the von Raumer translation and school compositions, had been a lugubrious story for the Penn Charter magazine about a Russian immigrant boy who committed suicide rather than quit school and go to work.

But from my first year at Haverford I was an indefatigable writer. Two of my first sketches bore the formidable titles "Nationalism and Art" and "Genius and Pathology" (it was a pet boyhood theory of mine that physical maladies stimulated artistic expression, and I was fond of citing the examples of Chopin, Nietzsche, and Dostoevsky in this connection). I drew on my stock of miscellaneous reading for stories, essays, brief dramas (which could certainly never have been acted) on themes as far removed from one another and from contemporary American life as Julian the Apostate and Conradin, the last of the Hohenstaufens. No wonder that the class record contained the following ambiguous tribute to my writings: "Chamberlin's contributions to the *Haverfordian* have edified those of us who could understand them."

These flights of adolescent fancy and erudition were innocuous, perhaps even respectable in the eyes of academic authority. This was not the case, however, when I put on the armor of a crusading St. George and set out to slay a dragon in the person of the Reverend Billy Sunday, who had come to Philadelphia on one of his financially very profitable soul-saving campaigns.

I cannot say that I have any more regard for Mr. Sunday's theological views now than I did at Haverford. But I do consider him one of the most amusing of the comedians who have trodden America's vast comic stage. A buoyant ex-I.W.W. whom I knew in Moscow could always bring down the house with his impersonation of Billy Sunday shouting: "I'll fight the devil. And, if he

runs to the North Pole, I'll put on skates and chase him down to hell." And one of the funniest items that ever appeared in the "Americana" department of the *American Mercury* was an excerpt from an address by Billy Sunday in Nashville, Tennessee, which ran somewhat as follows:

"My friends, there's an anti-government, anti-God, anti-marriage, anti-everything gang in this country, and if they got in control the laws of nature would be reversed. Cats would bark and dogs would mew, pigs would crow and roosters would squeal, the sun would rise in the west and set in the east, yesterday would be day after tomorrow and the part would be greater than the whole, my friends, if that gang were in control."

But youth, if it has ideas at all, is apt to take them with deep seriousness. To me at the age of seventeen Billy was not to be laughed at, but to be denounced with all his own vehemence, if in somewhat better English. He was the incarnation of ignorance, bigotry, obscurantism, and all the other sins of my cultural credo. An article entitled "The Church, the College, and Billy Sunday" set forth these views with considerable acerbity, elicited several violently abusive letters from "saved souls" and an *ex cathedra* rebuke from President Sharpless, speaking in Collections, as morning chapel was called at Haverford. The college authorities showed even less relish for an editorial which I published denouncing compulsory church attendance.

I finally achieved what is at once the fear and the hope of the youthful rebel, official censorship, when criticism of proposed Sunday concerts by the Presbyterian ministers of Philadelphia inspired me to write a piece contrasting the supposed spiritual values of Beethoven and Schubert symphonies and of Calvinistic theology, much to the disadvantage of the latter. I received a summons to the President's office. Going there, not without "trepidation," to use Smith's favorite word, I received a mildly worded but firm ultimatum to discontinue writing on "theological subjects." Here again "Uncle Ike" displayed diplomatic finesse; he prefaced his command with the remark: "Chamberlin, thee causes me a great deal of trouble"—a remark which, as he doubtless shrewdly calculated, was not unflattering to a youthful undergraduate.

Besides turning out articles, harmless or seditious, I found plenty of occupation in college. In my studies the uneven trend of earlier school experience persisted. Subjects which I disliked

(physics, biology, geometry), I barely scraped through; and they left no impression on me. I made an appalling sketch of an insect which was being dissected in the biology laboratory, and dutifully marked two points on it as "joints," whereupon a frivolous classmate remarked: "That looks like a map of Philadelphia, with its two leading 'joints.'"

On the other hand, Greek and Latin, in which I specialized, appealed to me more and more as I advanced further. My diary is full of such references to my classical readings as the following:

The climax of Thucydides' great dramatic narrative is certainly reached in the description of Demosthenes' futile night attack on Epipolae. Even at this distance of time I cannot help feeling a bitter regret that the Athenians did not succeed in their daring venture.

My days were not all spent in study; I played a fair amount of tennis and often took an all-day Sunday walk in the mildly rolling countryside around Haverford. Of the five temptations of St. Anthony against which President Sharpless had warned the incoming freshmen, three, drinking, smoking, and er—immorality had no effect on me. Once, after much persuasion, a more worldly classmate lured me to the Trocadero, a variety theater in Philadelphia much frequented by sailors which the pillars of the college Y.M.C.A. regarded as a symbol of Sodom and Gomorrah. My solemn comment was worthy of a seventeenth century Puritan: "The performance reminded me of the inartistic license which ruled on the English stage after the Restoration." And I found much more enjoyment in a lecture on Nietzsche by Emma Goldman the following evening. As for the other temptations, I doubtless did my fair share of loafing and it was in the dormitories of a Quaker college that I carried out some practical studies of the laws of probability, as exemplified in poker hands. But my victories and defeats on this front never brought me any great increase of capital and never led me to pawn any family heirlooms.

What I missed most in Haverford, as during the years after leaving college, was sympathetic intellectual companionship. Haverford was well above the academic average of the American small college. Yet few of the students read much for the pleasure of reading. I was once the sole competitor for a prize of forty dollars' worth of books which had been established for "outside reading."

It was with keen interest and substantial agreement that I read



the magazine articles of M. E. Ravage, an immigrant from Rumania, about his experiences and impressions as a student in American universities. Instead of confining himself to gush about "the land of the free" Mr. Ravage voiced some very pointed and, as I thought, very well justified criticisms of the intellectual immaturity of the majority of American students. I felt that here was someone who, with quite a different background from my own, probably possessed similar tastes and suffered similarly because they were not more common. I have never met or corresponded with Ravage; but I noticed later that he became the author of several books and settled down in what I hope is the congenial atmosphere of Paris.

Not that I led the life of an isolated recluse at Haverford. I reckoned there several good friends and a number of acquaintances. But most of my experiences with books and almost all my experiences with music remained personal, bottled up within me, except in so far as they spilled out in my writing for the *Haverfordian*. I remember once noticing that some reader had written "How beautiful!" on a copy of Turgenev's "Torrents of Spring" and wishing I could meet this unknown admirer of Turgenev—most probably a poor immigrant from Russia. But no such romantic fantasy ever came to pass.

Despite occasional fits of spiritual loneliness, despite an unsatisfied desire to establish myself in New York, which attracted me as Paris attracted Balzac's provincial intellectuals, the years at Haverford were happily and, I think, purposefully spent. Like all good things, they came to an end at last. I submitted my Bachelor of Arts thesis on "The Influence of the House of Hohenstaufen on the History of Europe," fired a last blast at constituted academic authority by inserting into the final issue of the *Haverfordian* an article with the suggestive title "Academic Freedom: The Reality and the Ideal," and stepped out of a sheltered college life into a rough-and-tumble world where I had no grounds for great expectations.

These years of preparatory school and college were in the highest degree formative. In many ways they predetermined the course of my future life. Not that I came out of Haverford equipped for any definite work or profession. I stumbled up more than one blind alley before I found a satisfactory occupation. But both my limitations and, much less clearly, my possibilities were indicated

before I left Haverford. It was obvious that I could expect no success in any technical profession or in any job that required business acumen or initiative. At the same time I had developed a bent for writing, a capacity for working hard on subjects which interested me, an awareness of current affairs which were part of the foundation for my future work as a foreign correspondent and writer.

Outwardly placid and uneventful, inwardly my boyhood and adolescence were intense and passionate because of my ardent response to the many stimuli of my favorite authors and composers. Very significant for my character was the absence of external pressure and discipline. If I found aspects of America which Sinclair Lewis depicted so well in "Main Street" and "Babbitt" unsympathetic, if I took refuge in European dream castles, I can never, in retrospect, be sufficiently grateful for the complete absence of the goose step in the American scheme of things.

The absence of military conscription and of the still worse barracks regime for mind and body which has grown up in all the postwar dictatorships was an immense negative boon to a born individualist like myself. Neither was I subjected to any other form of spiritual strait jacket: a tyrannical family, a dogmatic religion, an ideal of class behavior to uphold. If I missed in my mental quests the informed guidance and the sympathetic associations which would have been of great benefit, I found no artificial obstacles in my path of self-education.

There are many links between my youth and my early middle age. As a result of my work politics and economics have pushed my old fondness for literature into the background; and the classics, I deeply regret to say, are a lost cultural frontier which I propose to regain at the first opportunity. But most of the books which I valued in youth are still on my library shelves. And the resonant overture to "Die Meistersinger," the exquisite horn motive in Brahms's First Symphony, the crashing surge of Chopin's Revolutionary Etude stir the blood as they did twenty-five years ago, when I rarely missed a promising concert or recital in Philadelphia.

Several of my minor habits became pretty firmly fixed in youth. Indifference to dress and to formal social conventions in general was one of these; I still abhor the occasional obligation of putting on a black tie. Dislike for alcohol and tobacco, compensated by

an inordinate fondness for milk chocolate (preferably eaten while reading) has remained unchanged since college years. This is also true of my favorite forms of exercise, tennis and long-distance walking, although it was only after I went to Europe that I began to enjoy the added zest of walks and climbs of the mild variety in mountainous regions.

Perhaps these formative years will be more closely linked with my later than with my middle period. For when the time comes to retire from active service it is to some personal cultural monastery that one may well want to retire, if this is possible, from the spectacle of a world of air black-outs and gas masks that is alarmingly assuming many features of the disordered, broken Roman world of the fifth and sixth centuries which drove so many people into religious retreats. But this is perhaps looking too far ahead.

## CHAPTER TWO: *Blind Alley*

*My college years* were a reasonably good preparation for life as I intended to lead it. They were an uncommonly poor preparation for making a living. There was no cash value in a knowledge of Homer and Vergil, Tacitus and Thucydides, supplemented by miscellaneous readings in German philosophers and dramatists and French and Russian novelists. My sole visible commercial assets on leaving the sheltering walls of Haverford were ability to write literate English and familiarity with the use of a typewriter. In view of these circumstances it is rather surprising that I was not thrown on whatever took the place of the W.P.A. in those Old Deal days. I was lucky to get off with no worse experience than finding myself in two or three blind alleys.

Since none of my ancestors had been forethoughted enough to provide the means to subsidize the indefinite period of study which I should have enjoyed, I had long accepted the regrettable necessity of working for a living after completing my college course. But I gave little thought to the choice of work. New York at that time loomed up as a sort of Mecca of my hopes. The intellectual and musical currents there seemed so much stronger and deeper than those of Philadelphia. So, during pilgrimages which I regularly took to the metropolis during the Christmas holidays, and which included a round of concerts and opera, periods of reading in the Public and Columbia University libraries and visits to the east side, the Russian Cathedral and other exotic scenes of New York, I timidly presented notes of introduction at two or three publishing houses. I had no particular qualifications for any specific post, nor was my personality of the more or less mythical type which

breaks down the sales resistance of the prospective employer at the first swoop. So these tentative overtures came to nothing.

My mother hoped that I would follow her father's profession and become a lawyer. With her usual fond partiality she envisaged me clothed in judicial ermine and handing down decisions from some high bench. But law had never impressed my imagination as had history, literature, and music. So there was no incentive to invest time and money in professional study after graduation. Medicine, engineering, chemistry were obviously excluded because of my complete lack of scientific aptitude. Teaching might have seemed more promising; but I had come to consider the American student rather stony soil for instruction in the subjects in which I was interested.

So, by a process of elimination, I drifted into newspaper work. My ambition was to become an editorial writer or a book and music critic. But my first job, in the usual course of things, was that of a fledgling reporter, at fifteen dollars a week, on Mr. Cyrus Curtis's *Public Ledger*. I started out on this work with small expectations, which were quickly realized. I had always been more attracted by ideas than by individuals, and the young reporter's round of police stations, war rallies, banquets of florists' associations and Irish fraternal orders was not calculated to stimulate interest in the human race.

To be sure my worst nightmare, that of being ordered out to report a fire, never came to pass. One of my strongest traits can best be described as the precise opposite of pyromania. I have always been vastly indifferent to fires, in so far as they did not threaten my own dwelling. I would make a detour of some distance to avoid the sight of a burning building which would attract a throng of curious spectators. The thought of being obliged not only to watch a fire but to learn the facts about it amid a horde of cursing policemen, spraying firemen, and milling onlookers was enough to send chill shivers down my spine. But I was never subjected to this ordeal; the canny instinct of the city editor doubtless led him to send more experienced members of his staff to cover any conflagrations which occurred in Philadelphia in the summer of 1917.

But, if my reporting assignments were less formidable than I had expected, they were, with few exceptions, extremely boring. I recall an interview with an American aviator who had returned

from flying in France and one or two others that were interesting and a few more that were amusing. One of the latter was a war rally in a car barn, where a homespun orator, whose patriotism was stronger than his grammar, told the applauding audience, as he pointed at the flag: "This here flag, it ain't the flag of no king and it ain't the flag of no queen." But when my brief and inconspicuous career on the *Ledger* came to an end I pronounced judgment on it in the ponderous neo-Johnsonian style which I affected in my diary:

I become more and more thankful that my days of bondage as a reporter are numbered. I can conceive of few more wearisome occupations than the constant chronicling of the adventures of peripatetic infants who persist in hurling themselves in front of juggernaut automobiles, of inebriated gentlemen who blow out the gas, of trolley cars which inadvertently lose their power and become involved in collisions.

From the *Ledger* I passed over to the near-by *Press*, where I became assistant editor of the weekly magazine. In every way this post was more congenial than the reporting which I abandoned. The hours were far more agreeable; as a reporter I had been on duty from early afternoon until midnight. The new work was all in the daytime, except for one hectic night when the magazine went to press. The "peripatetic infants" and "inebriated gentlemen" ceased to plague me, and I got on very well with my new boss, an earnest young Jewish Socialist named Goldberg, partly, no doubt, because we shared critical and negative views on the war. This fact made the small corner of the city room where the magazine was fashioned the target of occasional sour looks from some of the superpatriots on the staff. However, the only overt attack against us took the form of plastering Goldberg's desk with screamingly headlined stories of the "Sisson Documents," which purported to prove that the Bolsheviki were German agents.

In fact, when I look back at America's war era in the light of later experience in the Soviet Union I am surprised at its relative tolerance. I made no great secret of my own antiwar views. I sent an enthusiastic telegram of congratulation to Senator La Follette after a defiant speech which he delivered in the Senate on October 6, 1917. I wrote several letters to newspapers, praising La Follette and taking issue with extreme war sentiment. Some of these were printed, and some were not.

Another letter, which I wrote under a pseudonym and considered profoundly satirical, appeared in the "Forum" department where the *Press* published the more or less literate contributions of its readers. I suggested that there could be little reality in the much vaunted German efficiency, since any American jazz composer could toss off thirty or forty masterpieces in a year, while Beethoven, one leading "Hun" composer, had written only nine symphonies and Wagner only a dozen operas. I went on to propose that the Philadelphia Orchestra should pay homage to the spirit of the time by making up a program for which I suggested the most moronic titles of current jazz favorites. Perhaps I did not realize that there was all too much possibility of such a project being taken seriously. One of the tragi-comic headlines of the war years was: "Pittsburgh Bans Beethoven."

I got in touch with a few former Haverford students of pacifist views, and we made some quite futile efforts to rally support for such shadowy organizations as the Collegiate Anti-Militarism League and the Young Democracy. The original leading spirit in this latter organization, incidentally, was finally revealed as a government agent. This activity was certainly harmless enough, so far as affecting the prosecution of the war was concerned. Yet I know personally of many Soviet citizens who have been arrested and sent to concentration camps for much less open demonstrations of opposition sentiment. The freedom of action enjoyed by antiwar groups and individuals in America at that time, limited and precarious as it was, far exceeds the normal liberty of dissident expression in the Soviet Union or in any of the totalitarian states.

In wartime America there were, of course, some outrageous cases of mob violence (one of America's cardinal national sins) and some barbarously long sentences of imprisonment pronounced against war objectors. The great majority of these, however, were redressed within a comparatively short time after the end of the war. And if there were insurance policies against death and imprisonment for political reasons the rates would certainly be far higher in the contemporary Soviet Union, Germany, and Italy than in America during the World War.

Neither Goldberg, whose earnest socialism was an unconscious substitute for religion, nor I was pro-German in the sense of sympathizing with the Kaiser or desiring a German victory. The familiar obtuse mentality that saw in every opponent of the war a

secret agent of the German General Staff prepared me for later encounters with the Communist assumption that anyone who opposes communism must be a fascist and for the corresponding fascist effort to pin a communist label on every opponent of this method of achieving a secular millennium.

My own attitude toward the war was a compound of intellectual doubt and criticism and passionate emotional antipathy. I instinctively sensed the fallacy of the idea of a "war to end war." Yet Wilson's rhetoric, his rebukes to selfish and imperialistic war aims, had some effect on me, although never to the point of making me wish to anticipate the draft by enlisting.

When the war broke out in Europe I took sides vehemently with the typical partisanship of youth, and during the greater part of my stay at Haverford I was an extravagant pro-Ally. I am still a little ashamed of some of my comments at that time; they are as silly as anything said or written on the same subject by Theodore Roosevelt and other advocates of war at any price.

A book that contributed very much to inspiring what I now consider a more rational view of the war was George Brandes's "The World at War." I already knew and admired Brandes because of his richly informed and eloquently appreciative work on Poland. His "World at War" was one of the few books of the time that sincerely eschewed partisanship and focused attention on the essential permanent aspect of the war: the tragic spectacle of the most civilized continent in the world committing human and cultural *hara-kiri*. My note on this book in my diary reads:

It is the first "war book" I have read for a long time that does not impress me as the work of a violent lunatic. The author's logic is absolutely convincing in its demonstration that no one nation can be held responsible for the catastrophe of August, 1914.

In this frame of mind I grasped at every straw of hope in Wilson's more liberal speeches, fell into discouragement whenever Lloyd George or Clemenceau called for a knockout blow and followed with interest the feeble and abortive efforts of the socialist and labor forces in various countries to pave the way for a negotiated peace. I began to believe strongly in Wilson's ideal of peace without victory after he had abandoned it. I liked to repeat a story which was told of Bob Smillie, a leader of the British miners. Smillie was reported to have said that, if asked the familiar hypo-



thetical question, "Daddy, what did you do in the great War?" he would reply: "My boy, I tried to stop the bloody thing."

Temperamentally I was predestined to be out of step in a war atmosphere. For, although capable of a good deal of enthusiasm for a cause, an idea or a personality, I have always been unresponsive to the mass emotionalism that finds expression in wars, violent revolutions, and religious "revivals." I am instinctively distrustful of any movement that calls for blind obedience and suspension of the reasoning faculty.

Moreover, I felt keenly at the time and still feel that America's participation in the World War lacked the sanction of popular approval. I could see nothing of the spontaneous rush to arms that marked at least the first stages of the War of the Revolution and the Civil War, conflicts that arose over issues that were readily understandable to the masses. Before the draft was introduced, a week of voluntary recruiting was a pitiful failure, yielding only about one-tenth of the men who were called for. Once the huge machine of war propaganda and compulsion began to function, to be sure, it worked fairly smoothly. While there was, I am convinced, no popular will for war, except among a part of the well-to-do classes in the Eastern states (long after the *Lusitania* had been sunk Wilson was re-elected largely on the issue of "keeping us out of war") there was no conscious resolution to resist a war which the Government had somehow let the country in for.

America's wealth helped to smooth the way for successful mobilization. The A.E.F. was probably better cared for than any army in history as regards food, pay, medical attention, provision for the disabled and for families. And no doubt bellicose pastors, mob-minded college professors, and four-minute war orators, suddenly turned experts on German history, morals and psychology, succeeded in generating a certain amount of synthetic hatred for "the Hun" before the war was ended. This hatred was, however, more prevalent, so far as I could observe, among elderly ladies and gentlemen well beyond military age than it was among the men who were called on to do the fighting. And the lift, the sense of spiritual exaltation which one would associate with a war for some cause of compelling national enthusiasm, seemed to me entirely absent. One was impressed by the suggestive contrast between the trivial "Over There" and other transient songs of the World War and such anthems of the Civil War as "John Brown's

Body," "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "Maryland," and "Dixie."

And I think the general run of people showed themselves wiser than the prowar intellectuals when they failed to catch fire for the idea of a crusade in Europe. It is seldom that such complete military victory as America helped to bring about has been followed by such complete political and economic frustration. It would certainly be difficult to point to a single positive achievement that might be regarded as compensation for the hundreds of thousands of killed and wounded and the twenty-five billion dollars of war expenditure.

Was the war fought to make the world safe for democracy? Communism, national socialism, fascism are surely an emphatic commentary on the futility of trying to vindicate by force of arms for the whole world an ideology that has worked well only in North America and in a few European countries and outlying British dominions. Was it fought to uphold the American right to trade freely with one group of belligerents, the right of Americans to travel unscathed through war zones on belligerent ships? On this assumption the failure was surely equally complete.

Reflections on the war naturally did not occupy all my time. I continued to read, although not nearly so much as in preparatory school and college days. My enthusiasm for music remained unabated, as the following enthusiastic entry in my diary shows:

The heroic outburst at the conclusion of "Tasso" completely carried me off my spiritual feet and left me in a seraphic state for the rest of the night.

My few college friends were scattered in various parts of the country, and I began to seek new companionships. Girls had played no part in my life at Haverford; but I now began to look around more or less consciously for someone of my own age and the other sex who would share my interests. I cannot say that the restricted cross-section of middle-class Philadelphia with which I came in contact was a happy hunting ground for such a search. I must have bored the American girls whom I met almost to desperation with my talk of Wagner and Nietzsche and European politics. And I must confess that from their society I carried away a flat and insipid impression, so far as intellectual development was concerned.

I sometimes imagined that I should meet a European girl to whom enthusiasm for music and literature and abstract ideas would come more naturally. I did become acquainted with two Polish girls whose parents had emigrated to America some ten years previously and whom, in the flush of first meeting, I endowed with the virtues of Turgenev heroines. And they were more appreciative companions at concerts than my acquaintances of older American stock. But they were moving psychologically in an opposite direction from myself. They were becoming practical, Americanized, more interested in automobiles than in sonatas and ballades. Ford and Edison were coming to dominate their lives, while I remained under the influence of Chopin and Sienkiewicz. By American standards I was not "getting" anywhere in particular.

So the acquaintanceship with the young ladies from Warsaw never went beyond the most Platonic phase. In the end I came to enjoy the society of the parents more than that of the girls. The father especially had much of the quiet dignity which is a frequent Polish characteristic. It was a pleasure to talk with him about Polish life and Warsaw and the Vistula and the Old World which he had left behind and I was looking forward to seeing.

Another experiment in exotic contacts was Minnie R., a radical Jewish working girl who had been arrested during a scuffle in which some patriotic sailors had broken up an antiwar meeting. I had happened to cover this incident as a reporter. Our views on the war and on politics were quite similar. But somehow after a few meetings and excursions we drifted apart.

Other acquaintances whom I recall from this period in Philadelphia are Dr. Eli Mayer, a liberal rabbi, and his wife, a talented violinist, and my former professor of biblical history, Dr. Henry Joel Cadbury, whom I occasionally visited in his home on the Haverford campus. Dr. Cadbury, an eminent scholar and a convinced pacifist, later figured in an incident which reflected little credit on the authorities of Haverford College in 1918.

It was in the last days of the war, and Dr. Cadbury had published in one of the Philadelphia newspapers a very moderately phrased letter, pleading against a vindictive peace. The letter would have been generally recognized as elementary common sense ten years or even one year later. But the mood in America at that time was suggestive of a Soviet purge or a Nazi pogrom. Americans who are self-righteously disposed to wash their hands

of Versailles and to throw all the blame for this bad peace and its aftermath on the Allies would be well advised to look up the records of 1918-1919 and see how seriously Wilson's groping and not always consistent striving for a fair settlement was hampered by extreme warmongers at home.

A chorus of vituperation was raised against Dr. Cadbury, and Haverford, to its shame, bowed to the mob sentiment and let him go. This would certainly have seemed to be an issue on which a Friends' college should have stood by a pacifist professor, even at the cost of a little temporary unpopularity. Fortunately Dr. Cadbury's subsequent academic advancement was not adversely affected by this incident.

Perhaps my best friends were Linton Martin, literary and musical critic, and the Zimmerman family in Germantown, where I found an atmosphere of what might be called, for want of a better term, prewar American radicalism. There was opposition to religious dogma, favor for women's suffrage, prison reform, and all "advanced" causes, a generally pacifist trend of thought, and an eclectic interest in socialism, single tax, and other proposed means of making the world a more desirable place in which to live.

Martin and I were insatiable Wagner devotees, and whenever I visited him at his home in Sharon Hill, a suburb of Philadelphia, records of *The Ring* and "Tristan" resounded until the early hours of the morning, doubtless to the disgust of all the neighbors within earshot. Martin had a keen sense of humor and told the story of a guest, not such a confirmed Wagnerite as myself, to whom he put the question, after a session of music: "Don't you feel the lingering anguish of the *Liebestod*?" and received the ambiguous reply: "Oh, I feel the *anguish* all right." Another favorite phrase of Martin has often occurred to me when I observed the mentality of the younger generations that are reared under dictatorships:

"The cocksureness that is so obviously based on the most dismal ignorance."

But on the whole my life in Philadelphia was lonely, all the more so because I had the sense of being in a blind alley. Being assistant magazine editor with abundant opportunities for seditious political talk with my chief was a good deal more fun than roaming about the police stations of Kensington and other remote sections of Philadelphia on the dreary assignments of a cub reporter; but it

was only a job, without intrinsic interests and without any special contribution to make to my development. The period of systematic study in college was ended, and the desultory reading which I kept up was not a satisfactory substitute.

Moreover, the war was becoming a personal, not a theoretical problem. I escaped the first registration for military service because I was not yet twenty-one; but the second draft had caught me, and I could expect to be called at any time after the middle of 1918. Although I had not been sufficiently quick-witted to think of any way of evading military service, my aversion to the war had become so bitter that I seriously contemplated a demonstrative suicide in the event of being drafted. I find the following entry in my diary on my twenty-first birthday, February 17, 1918:

If possible I am more "without dogma"<sup>1</sup> than ever. The only thing I am really convinced of is the indubitable right of every individual to lead the fullest and richest possible life. My views on war have changed radically.<sup>2</sup> Aestheticism and individualism are my two cardinal principles and war cannot be reconciled with either. If I should ever be forced into military service I think I would find refuge not in "conscientious objection," but in suicide, which is after all the ultimate triumphant reply of an individualist to the persecution of a stupid world.

This was not a passing fancy. I had reached the point of buying a revolver (it was remarkable how easily this could be done, even in wartime, in easy-going America) and was thinking out the text of a letter which I proposed to leave, with a copy to be sent to the *Nation*, the most consistently antiwar weekly of the time. It would have contained an expression of hope that international civilization would survive, a denunciation of militarism and conscription and an appeal to peoples everywhere to rise against them.

It is impossible to know whether I should have carried out this resolution if I had been faced with the prospect of front-line service. I felt that I had little to lose in life. And I feel in the retrospect of more than twenty years that such a death would have been more reasonable and purposeful, if only for the slight

<sup>1</sup> "Without Dogma" is the title of a novel by Sienkiewicz, in which the leading character is a skeptical intellectual.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to my adolescent fervor for the Allied cause.

propagandist effect it might have exerted, than being killed in a war with which I was entirely out of sympathy.

But the test of my readiness to resort to such a desperate remedy did not come. By the autumn of 1918, when my draft notification arrived, the German resistance was evidently crumbling. It was clear that the worst I had to anticipate was a few months in a training camp. The same unpredictable turn of historical fortune that saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of Germans, Frenchmen, Austrians, Englishmen, Italians, and Americans removed from me the temptation to take my own. The revolver was sold, the melodramatic letter was never written.

From the tragic I quickly passed to the comic. While packing my bags for departure I perpetrated what I described in my diary as "a revengeful coup" against the worthy Philadelphia *Press*. As this was my sole venture in "direct action" and was a successful hoax in which I still feel a guilty pride, I shall describe it in some detail. The *Press*, backed by some fifty million dollars of Wanamaker merchant prince capital, had started me on a salary of fifteen dollars a week, which was later grudgingly raised to seventeen dollars and fifty cents. This rate of pay, I felt, was a legitimate economic grievance. There was no Newspaper Guild in those days, so the prospect of rallying all my fellow wage slaves, from city editor to office boys, in a strike for higher pay was dim. Moreover, I temperamentally preferred the anarcho-syndicalist method of individual sabotage.

One of my classmates at Haverford was an unfailingly genial, although far from erudite scion of the "oil country" of north-western Pennsylvania whom I will call Shepard. He often entertained me with stories, which perhaps lost nothing in the telling, of the extremely rough-and-ready methods which prevailed in controversies between his "old man" and a rival oil magnate whom I will call Mastiff. This gave me the idea for a dynamite plot against the peace of mind of the editor of the *Press*. That newspaper carried a "forum," for which no one was particularly responsible, and which printed any letter remotely savoring of literacy. I had often laughed at the meandering, witless effusions of an occasional correspondent who signed himself "Anthracite."

This gave me another cue. Under the pseudonym "Bituminous" I wrote to the Forum, denouncing Shepard and Mastiff in the most unmeasured terms. I accused them of habitually blowing up

each other's oil wells, of grinding the faces of their workers until the latter were driven to Bolshevism, of "hampering the Government in its prosecution of the war and giving aid and comfort to the Hun"—a good mouth-filling libelous phrase in those frantic days. "In the little oil town of Petroleum Point," I added, "drunkenness and brawling are the order of the day, law and order are mere empty names and every man's life and safety depend on his quickness on the trigger."

This communication was duly printed at the head of the Forum, probably because it was typewritten. I then helped myself to some stationery from the Bellevue-Stratford, Philadelphia's most fashionable hotel, and, impersonating an irate Babbitt to the best of my ability, wrote a furious letter to the editor, which an accomplice signed: H. E. Mastiff. I called him every kind of blockhead for publishing my original letter, threatened him repeatedly with libel proceedings and ended with a truculent demand for apology and retraction, insisting that Petroleum Point was one of the most sober, God-fearing, hard-working towns in the United States. I was still employed at the *Press* and so could exultantly report at first hand the success of the *coup*, the authorship of which remained unsuspected:

The bombshell exploded even more violently than I had anticipated. The editor fell into a state of craven terror before the avenging Nemesis from Petroleum Point.

The upshot of the matter was the publication on the editorial page of the *Press* of a most abject apology to Shepard, to Mastiff, and to Petroleum Point. My grievance satisfied, I went off to play at soldiering with a lighter heart. Before I left I paid a round of visits to friends, to the Zimmermans, to Rabbi Mayer, who gave me a pamphlet which he had written to show that religion and war usually go hand in hand, to Professor Cadbury, who wished me to take the conscientious objector position, to the Polish family, where I became involved in a hot dispute with the older daughter about the war (her instinctive Polish dislike of Germany fitted in with the prevalent war mood), but found a more peaceful subject of discussion in Mickiewicz's "Pan Tadeusz."

Then, with a horde of rookies, I set out from Broad Street Station to State College, at Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. Here I was assigned to a unit which was supposed to learn topographical drafts-

manship. Being utterly destitute of capacity for any kind of drawing, I was a decidedly unpromising candidate for such instruction. However, the training, while completely useless, was not rigorous, and my first reaction to service in the armed forces of the United States was one of relief:

The routine of our life here is essentially military; but we are not as badly off as we might be in cantonments. The college dormitories are decidedly preferable to barracks; the food is wholesome, if not always palatable; and our schedule of work calls for more technical training than drilling.

Soldiering was just not in my line; I suppose few of the other recruits were so badly prepared for it by training and temperament. I instinctively shrank from even such a mild form of regimentation as marching in step, which, incidentally, I don't think I ever succeeded in doing satisfactorily. On one free Sunday I made a note to the following effect:

Although the afternoon was rainy and the roads were muddy, I took a long walk to-day. It is a relief to get away from the infernal monotony and uniformity of military movements and walk at your own pace.

I was not then and am not now an absolute pacifist. There are two hypothetical cases in which I would recognize a moral obligation to fight. One would be a foreign invasion of America; the other an attempt by a communist, fascist, or other minority group to overthrow democratic government in America and set up a dictatorship. But I would, I fear, be of uncommonly little use to the cause which I might espouse: for the same characteristics that have made me a hopelessly inept mechanic would make me a pretty inefficient and helpless soldier. It is probably just as well for all concerned that my martial career began and ended with two months of scrawling useless lines and circles at State College.

My roommates in the college dormitory were a tall husky Irishman who would probably have been a good front-line fighter and a short, fat Italian. This was before the vogue of the "Studs Lonigan" school of fiction, and I chastely remarked in my diary that "it would be impossible to transcribe even the mildest segments of their conversation without copious eliminations." However, I got on with them quite well, rejoiced to find them profanely responsive when I denounced individuals and groups which might



want to prolong the war and keep us in service and practiced on rainy off-days the modest skill at poker which I had acquired at Haverford.

The most amusing feature of camp life was a bull-throated regular Army sergeant who tried to put the fear of the Lord into us with thundering instructions and warnings. He once conveyed an invitation to a dance which some ladies of the neighborhood had arranged for us lonely soldiers in the following inelegant but emphatic terms:

“Yuh’ll go to that dance and yuh’ll act like gentlemen. And if yuh don’t”—a meaningful pause—“there’s M.P.’s [military police] that’ll throw yuh out a lot faster than yuh came in.”

One of the recruits bore the distinguished name of Napoleon. For some reason he was continually being called to account, and the sergeant’s bellow, “Napoleon, report to the orderly room,” added to the gayety of the mess hall. On one occasion the sergeant assumed the role of a detective in connection with the theft of a blanket from the body of a deceased soldier and harangued us as follows:

“The man who stole the blanket from the dead man’s body will turn it in at the orderly room. We’ve got a pretty good idea where that blanket is, and it’ll go hard with the man who stole it if he holds it out any longer.”

The Armistice news (preceded by the false report which an overzealous news agency put out four days ahead of the event) practically ended all serious work, although it took another month to muster us out of the service. A fire which burned down the engineering building and the college power plant completed the disorganization of morale. There was, I fear, general, if secret rejoicing over this event: for most of the courses had been given in the destroyed building, and even the lack of heat, keenly felt in the early winter of the Pennsylvania mountains, seemed a cheap price to pay for an early discharge.

It was during this period of life as an involuntary conscript that I became definitely pro-Bolshevik in sympathy. Ever since the March Revolution of 1917 I had followed the swift march of events in Russia with much interest, although I felt the handicap of learning of events through reporting that was often contradictory and sometimes downright ignorant. My reaction to the Bolshevik seizure of power on November 7 was reserved and noncommittal:

The news from Russia is vitally important. I had not anticipated such a sweeping victory for the extreme elements, although the stupid and reactionary diplomacy of the Allies (America included) certainly played into the hands of the Bolsheviks. The results of the coup are likely to be far-reaching; but it would be rash to predict them just now.

This last sentence had all the pseudo-wisdom of a platitude. It might have appeared as an editorial utterance in Zanesville, Ohio, or Fort Worth, Texas; but it reflected accurately my uncertainty of mind as to what was taking place in Russia. A visit to our office by an eyewitness from Russia was a great event for Goldberg and for myself. Once on successive days we listened to a Menshevik (moderate Socialist) interpretation of the Revolution from a Russian-American former *Press* reporter, Joseph Shaplen, who had just returned from a period of service in Russia for the United Press, and to a Bolshevik version from Louise Bryant, the wife of John Reed.

One message that moved me very strongly was Arthur Ransome's "Letter to the American People," published in the *New Republic* in the summer or early autumn of 1918. It was written at a time of supreme crisis in the existence of the Soviet Republic and possessed all the romantic quality of an appeal from a besieged city. I sympathized with the author's views, admired his eloquence and could not, of course, check up on the validity of his interpretation through first-hand contact with Russian realities.

Allied and American intervention greatly strengthened my sympathy with the Soviet regime. Here, I felt, was a villainous attack of militarism and capitalism on a regime which had renounced the war and smashed the capitalism in which, at that time, I saw the root of the war evil. I was delighted when news would leak out of some setback to the interventionist forces in Archangel or the Far East.

The two months which I spent making useless topographical sketches were big in European history. The old order crumbled in one after another of the defeated states. I was as enthusiastic over the process as any Russian Bolshevik. I remember with what sympathy, in my early Russian years, I talked with a Communist in Kazan who recalled how sure he was of the coming of the world revolution at the end of 1918. The war, as I felt, had placed a curse on every government responsible for it, a curse which could only be removed by a tremendous historical purge, the laying of a new

social order on a new basis. On November 13, immediately after the German Revolution and the Armistice, I wrote in my diary:

Goldberg sent me a short note in which he made the enthusiastic prophecy that socialism would soon sweep over the whole of Europe. He may be too optimistic. But it seems to me that, with Russia still in the hands of the Bolsheviki, with radicalism permeating most of the new states which have risen out of the wreckage of the Russian and Austrian empires, with Germany apparently gravitating towards extreme socialism, the frontier of capitalism has been suddenly pushed west of the Rhine. And indications are not wanting that the present governments of France, England and Italy will be compelled to face serious revolutionary movements on the part of the proletariat of those countries.

I think 90 per cent of my Bolshevik sympathy grew out of my bitterly hostile attitude toward the war. I had only a vague general idea of socialist theory, and my first serious study of Marx and Lenin came after I was living in Russia. The socialism I more or less took for granted; what made me a staunch partisan of the Soviet regime throughout the whole period of the Russian civil war was the feeling that here was the culmination of a triumphant revolt against a plot of the ruling classes in general and the capitalists in particular against the masses of soldiers of all nationalities who had been killed, wounded, gassed, maimed. The transition from anti-war feeling to social radicalism was easy and natural because almost all organized opposition to the war emanated from labor and socialist sources. And in America it was generally true, with a fair number of individual exceptions, that the more well-to-do classes were the more ardent proponents of the war.

A little of the former adolescent spirit of the college rebel also predisposed me to favor new and unpopular ideas. All respectable people at that time were violently opposed to Bolshevism. I had become accustomed to challenging the orthodox viewpoint at Haverford.

At last what I called "the great day" of discharge from the United States Army arrived. There was a final good-will banquet to the officers of the unit, and I grudgingly admitted to my diary that "we were treated as decently as military regulations permit," hastily adding that I was very thankful to be returning to civilian life.

During my stay in camp my parents had moved to New York,

and I had not tried to keep open my job on the *Press*. So discharge from military service, like graduation from college, meant a fresh start. I had no employment and no immediate prospect of obtaining it. But this weighed very lightly in the balance against the pleasant prospects of the future: departure from stodgy old Philadelphia, life in New York, always a boyhood dream, where I envisaged a host of radical friends and a brave new world which I sincerely hoped and believed would be a revolutionary one.

Then the mere casting off of the yoke of military service, light as it had been, was vastly exhilarating. I still remember the sheer delight of ordering a very modest meal at some lunch counter after leaving camp; it was exciting after two months of prescribed rations to choose just what I wanted to eat. The thought occurred to me then what an infinite relief it must be for the average man who has been engaged in real fighting to return to normal life. So, with forty-seven dollars and seventy cents for pay and expenses in my pocket, I set out for what was destined to prove a fairly extended cruise around the shores of New York's political Bohemia.

## CHAPTER THREE: *The Coast of Bohemia*

*En route to New York* I stopped off for a few days to see old friends in Philadelphia. Among my diversions there I noted a visit to the Zimmermans, "where I discussed Bolshevism and denounced Lloyd George and Clemenceau to my heart's content," and a radical party in an artist's studio, "with tea in a samovar and Bolshevism as its main ingredients." When I met someone whom I described as "a real tovarisch," a young Polish Jew who promised to introduce me to radical circles in New York, my delight was complete. At that time I experienced a strong access of xenophilia. I had encountered so little sympathy among native Americans either for my youthful interests in music, literature, and philosophy or for my later political and economic radicalism that I was favorably predisposed toward anyone who had not been born in America. The cosmopolitanism of New York was, for me, one of its chief attractions.

Once arrived in New York and settled in the congenial atmosphere of Greenwich Village (my successive addresses were West Eleventh Street, Waverly Place, and Grove Street) I again faced the necessity of earning a living. I cannot say that I succeeded very well during the first six months. A round of calls at radical publications brought some sympathetic exchanges of ideas, but no means of livelihood. An extensive canvassing of publishers' offices yielded nothing more substantial than a few commissions to submit opinions on manuscripts, at the piece rate of two dollars and fifty cents per opinion. I did a little irregular book reviewing for the *New York Tribune* and for some of the liberal magazines. My fondest ambition, to publish a signed article in one of these

magazines, was gratified in the summer of 1919, when the *Dial*, now long out of existence, printed a contribution entitled "Bolshevik Russia and Jacobin France."

But income from all these sources was small and precarious. I was lured by the siren promises of a correspondence course in chartered accountancy. In order to maintain myself until its visions of wealth were realized I took an examination to qualify as a postal clerk. But before I entered on this unpromisingly dull occupation a better prospect turned up in the shape of a regular job on the *Tribune*.

This period of unemployment did not weigh on me as heavily as might have been expected. With my Scotch inheritance on my mother's side I had saved some of my meager earnings on the *Press*, and I was never in the position of worrying as to where my next meal would come from. There was exhilaration in new friends and interests in an environment that seemed both romantic and spacious after Philadelphia. There were the cafés of Greenwich Village and the east side to explore. I found the New York winter air stimulating and never tired of the magnificent views over the Hudson and East rivers. It was a long time before I lost the taste for a ride on a Fifth Avenue and Riverside Drive bus.

This was the time when I met Sonya, who became my wife. She was born in Elizavetgrad, a town in south Russia, and had come to America as a child with her family. Her life had been the familiar saga of the more ambitious immigrant: a struggle for education and a place in the world, made more difficult by poverty, hard physical work, and the obstacles of a strange language, but ending successfully when she won a post as teacher of French in one of the New York high schools.

I always had a simple basic formula for happiness in marriage: broad congeniality of tastes and interests. So far as personal experience goes, it has fully justified itself. There is very little in our lives since 1919 that has not been shared. Together we have pored over the early newspapers and historical records of the Russian Revolution. Together we went through the experiences, interesting, amusing, irritating, of the foreign correspondent in Moscow. Together we admired the colors and melodies and rhythms of Russian opera and ballet, the incomparable stagecraft of the Russian theater. Together we tramped among the white peaks and blue lakes and high passes of the majestic Caucasus. Together we made one ex-

pedition after another into Russian villages, of which the last was in 1933, when we walked along dusty roads through Cossack and Ukrainian villages and heard the stories of the survivors of the manmade famine of the previous winter and spring. And from this crowning horror of an epoch which we instinctively called Russia's iron age, we drew the same lesson: uncompromising antagonism to any form of dictatorship and a new faith, very difficult to shake, in the saving virtues of democracy and individual liberty.

But these were experiences for the future. One of the things that drew us together in the beginning was warm sympathy for the Soviet Republic as we conceived it to be, hope that the interventionists and the Whites would be smashed. This was a subject that always took up a good deal of our conversations during the cozy and very unceremonious evenings which we spent at Sonya's home in the Bronx, sometimes with the accompaniment of a simple supper of hard-boiled eggs and tea and tongue and pickles from the nearest delicatessen. It was of Russia that we talked during Sunday excursions to the Palisades. And the Revolution added a new zest to our appreciation of the Russian music which we often heard from top-gallery seats at Carnegie Hall. We could imagine the heroic revolutionary era reflected in the ringing chords of the Tschaikovsky piano concerto, in the sonorous climax of his Fifth Symphony.

My first work at the *Tribune* consisted of writing headlines and filling out cables from abroad. It was better than reporting; but I experienced great satisfaction when I was soon shifted to the far more congenial task of assistant book editor under Heywood Broun.

Broun, a veritable twentieth century Dr. Johnson in girth and rolling gait, if not in ideology, was at that time an H. G. Wells liberal in world outlook. He had general charge of books and drama and also turned out a daily column, "It Seems to Me," in which his young son, "H. the Third," was often invoked to point morals and adorn tales. A favorite target of the column was a noisy Fundamentalist pastor named John Roach Straton. One of several minor crises which preceded Broun's departure from the *Tribune* to the *World* ranged around a piece in which he had envisaged Dr. Straton, in heaven, advising the Almighty to throw back a baseball which Babe Ruth had batted up to the celestial spheres, despite the objection that the throwing of a missile from such a height would probably cause great injury. This was referred to a high

ecclesiastical authority who pronounced it sacrilegious, so that it was deleted from the column, to Broun's great disgust.

Broun's assistant on the dramatic side was a Russian-born girl named Rebecca Drucker, whose inclinations were also toward the Left Wing. So our department was something of an anomaly on the *Tribune*, which outdid every metropolitan newspaper in the shrill vehemence of its war propaganda and was quick to turn on the Bolsheviki the vials of wrath which it had formerly reserved for "the Hun." It ran a rather juvenile hate series under the title "Coiled in the Flag,—Hearsssst," mainly devoted to abusing Mr. Hearst for what I consider one of the few creditable items in his journalistic record: his opposition to America's entrance into the war. There was an antediluvian editorial writer who probably regarded William McKinley as a dangerously advanced thinker and kept his verbal guns booming against the regrettable mildness of the Versailles Peace and the slackness of intervention in Russia. With my views of that time, I was decidedly in enemy country. But I exercised a measure of discretion which was a good preparation for writing under Soviet censorship in later years, and few people, I fancy, read my book reviews anyway.

Since the years on the old *Tribune*, Broun and I moved a long distance in opposite directions. His enthusiasm for communism, until the last few months of his life, apparently rose as mine waned. It is quite possible that, if our points of observation could have been exchanged, if he had gone to Moscow and I had remained in New York, our present points of view would have been correspondingly reversed. I sympathized with Broun's passionate defense of Sacco and Vanzetti. I was sorry to miss in his writings any realization of the implications of the fact that under the Soviet dictatorship there are so infinitely more Saccos and Vanzettis than there could ever be under a democratic system.

But this is getting ahead of my cruise along the coast of New York's political Bohemia. As compensation for my inhibitions on the *Tribune* I reveled in the revolutionary pseudonym of A. C. Freeman and began to publish front-page articles in the magazine section of the *New York Call*, Socialist daily newspaper, which finally gave up its precarious existence a few years later.

To mention the *Call* is to think of its combative editor, energetic, choleric, good-hearted Charlie Ervin, who rather liked the epithet of "Jeffersonian socialist" which some Greenwich Villager had



coined for him. Ervin was definitely American in lineage, and his outlook was that of a muckraking reformer rather than of a Marxian revolutionary. The result of his efforts to publish a daily newspaper for an audience mostly composed of foreign-born radicals was an amusing compound of Hearst and Marx. I suspect that a malicious critic might have tripped Charlie Ervin up on some of the finer dogmatic points of "Das Kapital." But there was something at once so sincere, so wholehearted, and so naïve about him that it was a delight to watch him, as I often did, in oratorical action.

"They'll tell you the *Call's* not loyal," he would thunder, with emphatic gestures of defiance. "Well, I'll tell you who the *Call* isn't loyal to. It isn't loyal to Speaker Sweet.<sup>1</sup> It isn't loyal to Senator Lusk<sup>2</sup> or to the interests that fool, rule, and rob the people, that are picking your pockets every minute of the day and night. But it is loyal to the class it considers itself privileged to serve—the working men and women of America."

On another occasion I heard him excoriate a conservative clergyman in the following characteristically emphatic terms:

"Right opposite that den of gamblers, thieves, and pickpockets (I'm speaking of the New York Stock Exchange) there's a church. And the minister of that church is one of the worst jingoes in this country. He goes about abusing the pacifists, calling for a larger Navy, in every way denying the principles of the Master whom he professes to follow."

But, despite Charlie's readiness at any time to let loose turgid periods of rhetoric against the lay and ecclesiastical lords of capitalist society, he was called a right winger, an opportunist, a social compromiser and many other Marxian bad names in the cafés, cafeterias, cheap restaurants, and other places where "Grand Street Platos" (to borrow one of H. L. Mencken's pungent phrases) were wont to congregate. He could not take his communism straight. He was the principal speaker at a meeting in honor of Mollie Steiner and several associates—all young Russian Jewish Anarchists, who, in the prevalent postwar hysteria, had been given outrageously long prison sentences for publishing a flamboyant manifesto of

<sup>1</sup> Speaker Sweet presided over the session of the New York State Assembly which decided to expel five Socialist members.

<sup>2</sup> Senator Lusk was the author of several laws, quickly repealed, which limited teachers' freedom of speech.

their Anarchist faith. The sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court, although Justice Holmes, in one of his typical dissents, expressed the opinion that the defendants had as much right to advocate their opinions as to circulate the Constitution of the United States. The sentences were commuted to deportation to Russia, a country which Mollie Steiner and most of her companions, like the older Anarchists, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, were subsequently glad to leave.

After relating a few instances in which the Cheka had given Anarchists decidedly rough treatment Charlie Ervin expressed the fear, fully justified by later events, that the deportees might find little tolerance in the land to which they were going. The Communists in the audience dutifully hissed, whereupon Charlie rounded on them and shouted: "Hiss, you snakes." I have always admired this riposte and yearned to employ it under similar circumstances myself, although I fear I have never been sufficiently provocative in public to earn the necessary preliminary hisses.

Charlie Ervin, like most of the other figures in political Bohemia, passed out of the range of personal acquaintance after I settled in Moscow. But even after the *Call*, despite his gallant piloting, had foundered on the financial rocks, I continued to notice comments on current affairs which he contributed to the *Advance*, organ of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Here he returned continually to the suggestion that King Victor Emmanuel of Italy should abdicate, since Mussolini had pushed him off the political stage. Charlie would even wax quite sentimental on this theme, declaring that the Princes of the House of Savoy always had plenty of red blood in their veins. He evidently believed that, if a cat could look at a king, a socialist publicist could tell a monarch when to quit his throne. I sometimes wondered with mild amusement what chance Charlie's appeals would stand of reaching the royal reading table in Rome.

A. C. Freeman continued to be a convenient pseudonym not only for the *Call*, but also for *Soviet Russia*, organ of the bureau established by Ludwig Martens, an engineer who acted as the unrecognized Soviet envoy to the United States until he was deported, with a number of his employees. The memory of what I wrote in the *Call* is a little dim at present. There was a blast of denunciation against Bertrand Russell because of his "counterrevolutionary" renunciation of faith in communism after a visit to Russia with the

British Labor Delegation in 1920. There were uncomplimentary sketches of such pillars of the existing order as Calvin Coolidge and Nicholas Murray Butler. I assumed the post—Heaven forgive me—of a sort of revolutionary expert on foreign affairs. It is slight mitigation of this presumption, absurd in view of my lack of first-hand foreign experience, to say that not a few other people have foisted on the American public as many half-baked ideas as I sponsored in the *Call*. I was quite proud once to find “A. C. Freeman” quoted at length in the *Literary Digest*. I had airily reduced some dispute between Great Britain and France to the cocksure formula that “the British bourgeoisie are traders, while the French bourgeoisie are pawnbrokers.”

I tried to be an independent strategist for the Communist International, to chart the course of world revolution in Europe and in Asia. America was too close at hand; I could not share the cheerful optimism of the Communist organ which, in 1922, announced that “the May Day of Revolution is here.” But I cherished great hopes of the overthrow of the British Raj in India with the aid of a revolutionary push from Russia via Afghanistan. I sought acquaintance with Indian radical nationalists, read such English language Indian newspapers as I could find and followed eagerly the course of Gandhi’s ventures in noncooperation. Incidentally I encountered a fellow “conspirator” against the well-being of the British Empire, equally ardent and equally futile with myself, although he had passed the biblical fourscore years of age.

One day I received a letter, addressed to me as A. C. Freeman, in care of the *Call*. The writer, who signed himself George Freeman, congratulated me on some article or book review and suggested a meeting in a numbered room of an office building in downtown New York. About the letter there was an atmosphere of mystery that invited speculation. There was the possibility that it might be a decoy from the Department of Justice, whose agents in those days were quite active in ferreting out “Reds.”

However, I appeared at the appointed time and place, which proved to be the musty office of an Irish nationalist newspaper, the *Gaelic-American*, which was edited by two old men, John Devoy, the veteran Fenian, and my correspondent. When we met I remarked that Freeman was not my correct name, whereupon he added a piquant touch to our meeting by replying: “Nor is it mine.” His original name was Fitzgerald, which he changed for

Freeman. Although he had the dry shriveled skin of advanced age, his eyes were bright and piercing and his mind was clear and active. Behind him was a varied and interesting career of military and civilian service in many countries, beginning when he was a very young subaltern in the Crimean War.

Born in Ireland, he became an increasingly extreme nationalist as he grew older and now, in the last years of his life, his mind was concentrated on the problem of compassing the downfall of British rule all over the world. "I'm an old man," he would say, "but I hope to live long enough to see the break-up of the British Empire." The range of his reading, correspondence, and interests was remarkable. He and Devoy, not so old as Freeman but very deaf, had a tacit division of labor on the *Gaelic-American*. Devoy pounded away on the eternal grievances of the Gael against the Sassenach and carried on a bitter factional fight against De Valera. This reached its climax when some ardent Hibernian ladies of the De Valera persuasion gathered around the office of the paper and chanted in solemn chorus:

"Old John Devoy has lived too long, has lived too long, has lived too long."

Devoy was not the man to accept a challenge tamely, and the next issue of the *Gaelic-American* carried an editorial frothing with defiance of "the old hags who were inciting to the assassination of the editor."

Freeman, on the other hand, took the whole world of British influence, outside of Ireland, for his sphere. One day he would turn up with the cheering news that the African Bantus were about to go on the warpath against British colonial administration. Another time he would ransack the latest batch of Indian newspapers to find items which might inspire hope of early revolt. But Freeman's greatest enthusiasm, which I shared, was for Afghanistan.

Here was a romantic free warrior-state that would be the spring-board for revolution in India, with a little military and technical aid from Soviet Russia. After I had gone to Moscow and met some Indian revolutionaries there who had actually visited Afghanistan and brought away decidedly disillusioning impressions my expectations of Afghan achievement began to decline. But good old Freeman, I imagine, comforted himself to his last day with visions of Soviet airplanes taking off from Kabul to bomb Peshawar,

followed by the iron tramp of Moslem legions, pouring out of the passes of Afghanistan.

Tall and still erect in bearing, Freeman's manner was that of a courtly old-school gentleman. He might have been an eighteenth century Jacobite or some other champion of a hopelessly lost cause. His conversation was by no means limited to anti-British revolutionary air castles. He had a truly Irish gift of humorous anecdote and a stock of entertaining stories from a life of wandering that had taken him all over Europe and the Near East before he found a last haven on the *Gaelic-American*.

At that time, when the guerrilla warfare which led up to the creation of the Irish Free State was in progress and India was in constant ferment, there was a good deal of wordy co-operation between Irish and Indian nationalists in New York. I attended a meeting, called to champion the cause of Indian independence and addressed by two Irish priests, who were very much of the Church Militant, so far as Great Britain and all its works were concerned. Gandhi's pacifism was a steep hurdle, but one of the fathers vaulted it in masterly fashion:

"Gandhi's a pacifist now," he declared, with prodigious emphasis on the *now*. "But why is he a pacifist? *Because he can't get arms*. And let me tell you, my friends, he would be the best fighter for India's freedom, if he could only get a few shiploads of rifles and ammunition."

From this meeting I carried away a mental note for a private dictionary: Irishman's definition of a pacifist—a man who can't get arms.

A rare personality, whom I miss more than most acquaintances of these New York years, was Helen Macgregor Todd, owner of the houses on Waverly Place and Grove Street where I lived during my first year in New York. It was delightful to have such an impulsive, warm-hearted, witty, improvident "landlady," who, incidentally, considered herself at that time at least half a Bolshevik. Like a number of women liberals and radicals, Helen Todd had graduated from the struggle for suffrage into a rather vague miscellaneous sympathy with movements of social protest and revolt.

"How do I know I'm a Socialist?" she once said dreamily as she was considering an invitation to join a Socialist organization. "Maybe I'm a Communist." She was far too kind-hearted to press

any of her impecunious lodgers for rent, with the result that her finances were frequently in a chaotic state. Bill collectors from heartless gas and electric companies haunted her front doorsteps, threatening to cut off these services if their claims remained unpaid. Meanwhile Helen Todd would probably be off in Washington on some voluntary errand of mercy, such as endeavoring to obtain a stay of deportation for some poor immigrant who had been caught in the dragnet of Mr. Palmer's police.

To her, as to myself and to most of our friends, Russia was a star of hope in a world that seemed to have learned nothing and forgotten nothing after the war. To be sure it was a little disconcerting to learn periodically from a humane and sympathetic lawyer who had worked untiringly with Miss Todd on the cases of the deportees that some had arrived in Russia only to find themselves in worse jails than those which they had left behind in America. However, we brushed such unwelcome news aside, a little uneasily, as just the price of revolution or as a result of failings of the deportees themselves. Walter Duranty had not come along with his agreeably soothing formula for every Soviet atrocity: "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."

Indeed at that time Duranty was turning out a pretty substantial quota of atrocity stories himself from Riga and other points on the Russian periphery. Of his future popularity with friends of the Soviet Union there was no trace.

At an informal social evening in one of Helen Todd's houses someone impulsively burst out with the suggestion:

"Wouldn't it be splendid if we should all give up American for Soviet citizenship, go to live in Russia, and write letters to the *New York Times* telling why we were doing it?"

All present, including myself, applauded the idea, but no one put it into practice. And it is easy to see in retrospect that the composition of the letters to the *Times* would have been by far the most enjoyable part of the experiment. The *Times*, it may be noted, was much more militantly conservative at that time than it is at present. The recent appointment as editor of a former associate of the editorial staff of the *New Republic* would have scarcely been thinkable then.

Many years afterwards I enjoyed a good laugh over the following effort of an American "proletarian poet":

I'm always thinking of Russia,  
 I can't get her out of my head;  
 I don't give a damn for Uncle Sam  
 I'm a left-wing radical Red.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever may be thought of the literary quality of this effusion, it would describe pretty accurately my state of mind during the years 1919-1922. I read every book I could get hold of on the Russian Revolution and followed the shifting fortunes of the civil war with close interest. I held my breath in suspense when the White General Denikin seemed almost at the gates of Moscow in the autumn of 1919, rejoiced when the White fronts collapsed during the following winter, felt heartbroken when the Red Army offensive crumpled up almost in the suburbs of Warsaw.

Naturally I was a regular attendant at meetings where Russia was the subject of discussion and listened eagerly to speeches by returned visitors. Two of the leading lions in New York pro-Bolshevik circles in 1919 were John Reed and Albert Rhys Williams. Reed, who returned to Russia to lose much of his faith in the results of the Revolution,<sup>2</sup> to die of typhus, and to receive a pompous

<sup>1</sup>Bad poetry has always exercised on me a kind of perverse fascination; I am afraid I remember it more easily than good. As a book reviewer on the *Tribune* I had some fun with a venture into anti-Bolshevik verse of a zoologist named Hornaday, which ran as follows:

They only count  
 The stupid units of the human race  
 Two dolts outweigh one Sermon on the Mount  
 Two apes can vote one angel from his place.

Later in Moscow I was an ardent press agent for a poem by a good-hearted, feeble-minded lady pilgrim which began:

I yearned to see your wondrous land,  
 I longed to shake you by the hand,  
 And now at last my dream's come true  
 And I have seen and talked with you.

This poem inspired in me (it was in my later Russian years) an irresistible desire to write some rival counterrevolutionary doggerel, of which the following couplets are specimens:

You've acquired a most unpleasant habit  
 Of shooting a man as you would a rabbit,  
 Scorning to state reason or cause,  
 Quite regardless of right and laws.  
 What you're pleased to call a sabotage trial  
 Just doesn't convince me, not by a mile.  
 Getting a room in a Soviet hotel  
 Suggests a third-class journey to hell.

<sup>2</sup>See in this connection the interesting testimony of Angelica Balabanova in "My Life as a Rebel."

funeral in the Red Square (his doubts and questionings had not become public property) I never met personally.

I obtained a strong impression of his vigorous, combative personality, however, as one of the audience at a debate between him and Joe Shaplen, who had come back from Russia to take up the thankless role of defender of the Mensheviks, who were considered counterrevolutionary by the Bolshevik sympathizers and suspiciously socialistic by conservatives. The debate, in an east-side hall, was held under very unfavorable circumstances for Shaplen, because both the chairman, Rose Pastor Stokes, and the vast majority of the audience, which consisted largely of H. L. Mencken's "Grand Street Platos," were strongly predisposed in favor of his opponent.

The vociferous cheers that greeted Reed's glowing account of the Bolshevik victory gave way to growls, snarls, and interjections when Shaplen rose and proposed to read a letter "that will show just how the Bolsheviks ruined Russia." He continued, "That letter was written—"

"—by a capitalist," shouted someone from the back benches, amid delighted applause.

Shaplen's patient explanation that the author of the letter was Comrade Ehrlich, with a distinguished record of service in the Bund or some other revolutionary organizations produced no effect comparable with the howls of exultation that went up when Reed, taking the floor in rebuttal, demolished him in the following fashion:

"I heard this 'Comrade Ehrlich' at the Second Congress of Soviets; and a more miserable, whining, sniveling counterrevolutionary I never saw."

Even at that time I am afraid I was somewhat deficient in two essential revolutionary qualities: intolerance and absence of any sense of humor. I couldn't help feeling that Comrade Ehrlich had scarcely been fairly dealt with, and sensing the amusing side of an audience so bent on hearing just what it wanted to hear.

Albert Rhys Williams, an ex-minister of the Gospel, was a less militant revolutionary than Reed. There was still a faint aroma of the left-wing pulpit about him, especially when he told the story of the Bolshevik peasant who had a picture of Abraham Lincoln hanging on the wall of his humble dwelling and had scrawled the word "Bolshevik" beneath the portrait of the Emancipator.

"And so you see," Williams would add in his best ministerial



manner, "that, whereas in America if you want to abuse a man you call him a Bolshevik, the highest tribute this simple unlettered peasant could pay to the great American whose picture hung on his wall was to write on it that one simple eloquent word: Bolshevik."

The *New York Times* once paid him the tribute of observing that perhaps the greatest achievement of the Bolshevik Revolution was "Albert Rhys Williams and the singular audiences which he addresses." About this time he published a ten-cent pamphlet entitled "79 Questions and Answers About the Bolsheviks," which enjoyed a phenomenal sale. The questions were adroitly worded so as to lead up to such soothing conclusions as the following:

"So the Bolsheviks do not want to kill the bourgeoisie?"

"No, they only want to put them to work."

An apoplectically indignant anti-Bolshevik rushed out an opposition pamphlet, entitled, as I remember, "Seventy-nine Questions Which Albert Rhys Williams Did Not Answer About the Bolsheviks"; but this had no effect on the success of the original work, which told the pro-Soviet faithful exactly what they wanted to hear. It was a sort of A B C of popular communist information, and one could hear genuine or garbled excerpts from it being cited with all the authority of Holy Writ at discussions among radicals. Williams later returned to Russia and lived for a time in a little town on the Volga. Here he acquired an unusual stock of information about peasant life, customs, and folklore which went into the making of his book "The Russian Land." He left the countryside, however, before it experienced the tragedies of forced collectivization and the "liquidation of the kulaks as a class."

It was through Williams, I think, that I met the late Alex Gumberg, whose Union Square apartment was a frequent informal meeting place for persons interested in Soviet Russia. Gumberg, who was of Russian Jewish origin, was the second of three brothers whose varied experiences against the background of the Russian Revolution would have made an excellent plot for a novel.

The oldest brother, who had shown marked promise as a university student, was on the moderate wing of the revolutionary movement and was imprisoned for a time under the Soviets. He survived this first storm of revolution and emerged as an official in one of the state trusts. But here he encountered new troubles, persecution, and harassment by the suspicious Communists in his

organization. With the shadow of his former non-Bolshevik political affiliations, his good education, and his "bourgeois" tastes, he was just the kind of person who might be picked off ultimately as a "wrecker," although I do not know whether this fate actually befell him.

The youngest brother, who went by the revolutionary pseudonym of Sergei Zorin, was the Bolshevik of the family. Like Alex, he had emigrated to America. But, unlike his brother, who displayed a good deal of capacity for adapting himself to American ways, Zorin could not get on in the new "capitalist" world. He remained an unskilled laborer, his revolutionary beliefs untouched by the softening effect of the fleshpots which America offers to many successful immigrants.

As soon as the news of the fall of Tsarism arrived, he went back to Russia with Trotzky and a number of other Russian revolutionaries who were living in America at the time. He became an active agitator for the Bolshevik party in Petrograd, was out with his rifle at the Winter Palace when the day of victory arrived in November, 1917, and became one of the chief lieutenants of Zinoviev, first President of the Communist International and party "boss" of Petrograd during the first years of the Soviet regime.

When I arrived in Russia I found Zorin living in the Kremlin, having just returned from an important political mission to Turkey. The former east-side unemployed laborer had become one of the first two or three hundred men of Soviet Russia. And it was a tribute to his sincerity that he lived in the Kremlin with little more comfort than he had formerly enjoyed in some New York tenement.

But Soviet eminence, quickly gained, can be quickly lost. Zorin was involved in the decline of his patron, Zinoviev, who fell from power in 1926 and was shot ten years later. His wife, a scantily educated working girl, left him when his prospects of advancement were thus clouded over. What finally became of Zorin I do not know; one seldom hears of friends or acquaintances in Russia unless their names appear in lists of persons who have been arrested or shot.

It has been said that France has its heart on the left and its pocket on the right. A similar observation might apply to Alex Gumberg's attitude toward Soviet Russia and capitalist America. His sympathy with the Soviet regime was quite sincere; he had friends in its ruling camp, and his special knowledge of revolution-

ary Russia brought him many contacts with Americans of left-wing sympathies and Russian interests. In his former capacity as secretary to Raymond Robins, American Red Cross representative in Russia, he had enjoyed a taste of high politics during the confused months after the Bolshevik seizure of power, when Robins maintained unofficial contact with Lenin and Trotzky. But he was never inclined to quit the safe anchorage of Union Square and take his chances as a Soviet citizen. And it is safe to say that his life was a good deal more tranquil than that of either of his brothers.

Gumberg's apartment was a natural magnet for individuals who were seeking information about Russia because he probably knew as much about what was going on within the Soviet frontiers as anyone in America during those years. He had personally known some of the revolutionary leaders when they were obscure and penniless émigrés on the east side. He had a good background of first-hand observation of Russia during 1917 and the first months of 1918. Batches of Soviet newspapers sometimes reached him, despite the blockade, and he became a sort of clearinghouse of news from and about Russia.

It was a varied group that gathered around the samovar from which Gumberg's hospitable wife, a California girl, dispensed tea in Russian fashion, in glasses, with an accompaniment of preserves. One of its most constant members was Kenneth Durant, son of a wealthy Philadelphia family, who had turned from making war propoganda for the Allies to acting as public relations counsel for the Soviet information bureau in New York. Durant was a good specimen of the younger American intellectual who turned sharply to the left as a result of disillusionment with the war and the subsequent peace. But he seemed capable of only one intellectual and emotional turn. Nothing that happened subsequently in Russia seemed to shake his faith that all was for the best in a Stalinite world.

Albert Rhys Williams was a fairly frequent visitor, as was Floyd Dell, then just emerging from the restricted circle of readers of the *Liberator* to a wider audience as a result of the success of his novel, "Moon-Calf." Occasionally William Hard, who was indebted to Gumberg for a good deal of ammunition in a campaign which he was waging against intervention in Russia and White propoganda in America, dropped in from Washington.

Russia was the common denominator of interest at these informal parties, but talk ranged over a wide variety of subjects: strikes in

America; the furious internal war which had broken out between Socialists and Communists; the progress of the guerrilla war in Ireland. There was a fair share of comic interludes. I was surprised one evening to see the costume of a Catholic priest in the company. Gumberg introduced the cleric as Father Blank, whereupon he said, with great solemnity:

“Don’t call me father. Call me comrade. I’m the only priest with a red card of membership in the Socialist Party.”

The idea that here might be a twentieth century St. Francis of Assisi was quickly dispelled as it became increasingly evident that Father Blank was in an advanced state of intoxication. He almost broke up the party by clamoring for taxicabs, explaining that he would like to present all the assembled guests to a family which he knew. The vision of a dozen miscellaneous Greenwich Village and east-side left wingers, headed by an inebriated priest, marching into some bourgeois Catholic household, was titillating, but contained disconcerting possibilities; and Gumberg hastily intervened to divert Father Blank to some less dangerous line of thought. As one of this eccentric priest’s acquaintances remarked:

“I can’t understand why he isn’t unfrocked. He is almost always drunk and is constantly proclaiming his sympathy with Bolshevism. Maybe the Church authorities leave him as a horrible example.”

Throughout these years my sympathy with the Soviet cause remained unshaken. I continued to turn out articles and book reviews as A. C. Freeman, and when I read books or news dispatches on Russia it was with the eye of a partisan, of an advocate seeking material for his case, not with that of an objective student. I find it interesting to retrace my psychological processes of this time, because more recently, after my views on communism had undergone a fundamental change, I was sometimes surprised at what seemed to me the obstinate refusal of some foreign admirers of the Soviet Union to face up to the logical implications of undisputed and incontestable facts.

Of course there were fewer such facts in 1919, 1920, and 1921. The violence of many of the attacks on Bolshevism acted as a boomerang and helped to strengthen the faith of believers like myself, for some of the stock accusations against the Soviet regime were demonstrably false, and others were clearly exaggerated;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *New Republic* published a long record of inaccuracies, exaggerations and contradictions in the reporting of Russian news by the *New York Times* at this time.

and it is easy for a partisan sympathizer, if he can detect an overlay of exaggeration in accusations of cruelty and oppression, to forget about the inconvenient substratum of fact which remains. If, for instance, five hundred people were shot as a reprisal in Petrograd after the attempt on the life of Lenin in 1918 and some anti-Bolshevik source gave the figure as five thousand I should be more interested in pointing out the exaggeration than in discussing the ethics of shooting five hundred people for a political attack in which they had no part.

And, like the audiences which enjoyed hearing John Reed demolish Comrade Ehrlich, and Albert Rhys Williams tell of the peasant who inscribed "Bolshevik" on the picture of Lincoln, I was most impressed by what I liked to read. The favorable writings of such visitors to Russia as H. N. Brailsford, George Lansbury, Arthur Ransome, and M. Philips Price heavily outweighed all the hostile observations. If a former sympathizer ceased to be one after seeing the Soviet system in operation, it was easy to discount him as a thin-skinned sentimentalist who couldn't take the inevitable hardships and cruelties of revolution in his stride.

I might have gone on indefinitely with my double personality as an inconspicuous book reviewer on the *Tribune* and a pseudonymous revolutionary publicist if the *Tribune* had not decided to dispense with my services. So far as I know, no one denounced me as the dangerous thinker, A. C. Freeman; but the 1921 depression had arrived, and my salary looked like a promising item on which to realize economies. Broun had left some time before as a result of consistent temperamental differences with the higher executive powers of the newspaper, and the book department, with delightful cynicism, had been turned over to the direct administration of the book advertising solicitor.

In retrospect I think the loss of the *Tribune* job was one of the most fortunate things that ever happened to me, although I naturally failed to realize this at the time. For my New York years represented just another blind alley, although quite a pleasant one. I did not possess enough feeling for modern fiction and poetry to become a good literary critic. My reviews of political, economic, historical, and biographical works were reasonably competent; but this was not a life work. And what I was writing about Russia was a compound of wishful thinking and polemical propaganda, without even the excuse of first-hand knowledge of the country.

I am almost horrified to think what my future career would have been if I had gone on undisturbed writing hack book reviews and surreptitious "redder than the rose" pieces for the left-wing press. I should probably have seen Russia only through the deceptive spectacles of a conducted tour. From such a tour I should have come back sincerely convinced that the workers in show factories and the peasants in model collective farms were leading lives more enviable than those of the wage slaves of capital.

Dismissal from the *Tribune* did not immediately point the way into the field of foreign correspondence. But it was just the spur that I needed to induce me to see Russia from Moscow and not from Union Square. The material prospects of the trip were not inviting. My only definite orders were from two or three radical publications which paid little or nothing. Just before I left I obtained a casual free-lance commission from the *Christian Science Monitor* to submit occasional mail articles. The trip was financed out of my own and Sonya's limited savings.

A little spice of persecution and difficulty was added to the trip at the beginning when our applications for passports were held up. A Socialist retired business man, A. A. Heller, had returned from a trip to Russia with an extremely vague commission to act as a Soviet unofficial representative in New York. I was personally acquainted with him and had helped him to prepare some articles on his impressions of Russia. In entire good faith he gave us documents which purported to be Soviet visas but carried no weight, as we were to learn later, with the regular Soviet diplomatic representatives. A letter of recommendation concerning us which Heller had sent to Moscow was evidently intercepted and read: for the delay in granting passports was explained when a detective ("defective" was a word which my subsequent ex-I.W.W. friend, George Andreytchine, liked to use in describing this genus) engaged in the Federal service summoned me for interrogation about my political and economic views and asked me, with a knowing leer, whether I wasn't "pretty well acquainted with A. A. Heller."

This, however, was only a passing obstruction. The passports were duly issued in the end. Frontiers in Europe were still bristling with immediate postwar inconveniences, and we wished to reach Moscow with as little delay as possible. So, on July 4, 1922, we boarded an old tub of a vessel called the *Latvia*, bound

for Libau, the chief Latvian port, and sailed away on what we regarded as our great adventure. And so indeed it was to prove, although not in the way we anticipated. We expected to be abroad some four months. Actually it was ten years before I saw the New York sky line again, bringing back a very different conception of Soviet Russia from the one which I glibly expounded as A. C. Freeman.

## CHAPTER FOUR: *Passage to Russia*

*From the practical standpoint* there was a strong element of the wild-goose chase about our passage to Russia. I was going to Moscow not only without any definite commission but also with only the vaguest idea of what I should do after I arrived. I lacked the faintest idea of the routine technique of a foreign correspondent. I had no plans for a book or a series of articles. Sonya was endangering her tenure as a teacher, gained with difficulty, by going on an extended trip to a country which was decidedly outside the pale of respectability at that time.

However, we were both in the mood to enjoy the experiences of today without taking much thought of the inevitable tomorrow. My first trip across the Atlantic was uneventful. Among our fellow passengers in the highly unfashionable *Latvia* were a physician of Latvian origin who was revisiting his native country (now an independent state), an unpleasantly loud and vulgar Russian family of the Nep type, and a very charming Polish woman. The two latter, incidentally, clashed with all my orthodox left-wing predilections. Light was supposed to come from Russia, while Poland was considered the embodiment of black reaction. However, I took refuge in the reflections that the Russian family was not genuinely communist, and that the Polish charm was just the veneer of a decaying aristocracy.

I felt a curious sense of coming home when I caught my first glimpse of European soil: the red-roofed houses along the sides of the Kiel Canal and the northern Gothic spires of Danzig, where we lay over for a day. Riga, where we had to wait two weeks for permission to enter the proletarian Promised Land,



left the impression of a pleasant drowsy town, with restful touches of medievalism. Like Danzig, it was essentially northern in climate and architecture. It was from Riga that I sent my first articles to the *Monitor*: an interview with the Premier and a general sketch of Latvian impressions.

There had certainly been nothing in my record to suggest that I should be an undesirable visitor to the Soviet Union; but it is the first principle of all bureaucracies that it is safer to refuse than to give, and that it is most unwise to give at once. So we spent two uneasy weeks in Riga, punctuated with frequent visits to the Soviet Legation, until the coveted permission to cross the frontier arrived.

When we came to the first Soviet border station I was delighted to see that, at least to my eye of faith, the Latvian side of the frontier looked just as unkempt and dilapidated as the Soviet. Here was the first concrete proof that the counterrevolutionary writers who had depicted Russia as a land of unique desolation were liars.

Our first day in Moscow might have discouraged less hardy pilgrims than ourselves. Many things changed during my subsequent stay of almost twelve years in the Soviet capital. But one feature of Moscow life which remained entirely constant was the terrific shortage of housing. And the plight of the newly arrived foreigner was even worse in 1922 than it might have been in subsequent years. Tourists were not yet shepherded through Russia. Only one hotel, the Savoy, was open to foreigners at that time; the others had been reserved for the occupancy of high officials or converted into offices to house the innumerable Soviet bureaucrats. The Savoy was naturally filled up, because Moscow was already overrun with a curious assortment of hard-faced agents of companies which were hunting for profitable concessions and starry-eyed searchers for Utopia.

Turned away from the Savoy, with our baggage piled high on one of the rickety droshkies, or horse-cabs, which were then the chief means of transportation apart from the jammed streetcars, we rattled over the cobblestone pavements, looking up one address after another in a vain search for shelter. The search might well have left us on the streets, if we had not met a certain Comrade Cook, or Cannon (I forget which was his real name and which was his revolutionary pseudonym), who was representing the

Communist party of America in the councils of the Communist International. He subsequently fell from grace as a Trotzkyist.

Cook, or Cannon, was very kind and helpful and went to considerable trouble to procure for us what had begun to seem the unattainable boon of a room with two cots in it. The previous occupant of the room had just left in the last stages of consumption and we discovered a few typhus lice crawling about. But then, as throughout our stay in Russia, we were proof against both germs and bites.

After a few days we were promoted to the Savoy. As a de luxe hotel it left something to be desired. There were telltale marks of certain traditional Russian insects on the walls. Rats occasionally paraded along the radiator pipes at night. The water functioned with erratic uncertainty, and the evening meal invariably included one course which a visiting American cartoonist gloomily and accurately designated as "the world's worst fish."

But we had not come to Russia with any expectation of enjoying bourgeois fleshpots. What we were interested in was studying at first hand the new order which we had admired from a distance. And this we set about doing—clumsily, no doubt, but assiduously—taking every opportunity to visit factories, schools, workers' clubs, children's homes, to meet and talk with Russians, both Communists and *bezpartinii* (nonparty), as the majority of the people who did not belong to the party were often called. Sonya's Russian rapidly came back to her, and she was able to adopt the method of direct approach to strike up conversations with people whom she met casually in offices, shops, and public parks. Largely because of this knowledge of the language, her faith was more quickly shaken than was mine. Once we attended that Soviet specialty, a purge, where students who could not prove their red-blooded proletarian origin or their devotion to the principles of Marx were being turned out of a workers' high school. Sensing, as I could not, with my very imperfect Russian, the meanness and skulduggery of the procedure, she wrote down in firm letters: "I am *not* a Communist" and passed the declaration of unfaith to me with a challenging gesture.

In later years I was often impressed by the special unwillingness of the Soviet Government to admit to the country anyone whose place of birth and background suggested a knowledge of the Russian language. Behind this discrimination there was a sound

psychological instinct. Even in the early days when both of us retained our original favorable bias, we were struck by the fact that it was generally those correspondents and observers who knew Russian who put forward the most reasoned criticisms of the Soviet regime.

The Russia which we found in the summer of 1922 was a curious mixture of fanatical communism and crude speculative capitalism, of bitterness and hope, of stagnation and revival. The country was just staggering to its feet after eight years of an ordeal such as few peoples have experienced. First there had been the World War with its prodigious casualties because of the inferior equipment and training of the Russian soldiers. This had been followed by the civil war, which took fewer lives on the battlefield, but more in terrorist massacres and devastating epidemics. And finally, during the year before our arrival, there had been the most terrible famine in Russia's history, caused by a combination of circumstances: drought, years of food requisitions which had used up the peasants' reserves and destroyed their will to produce, breakdown of transportation.

All this had torn up the old Russian social life by its roots. In the civil war brother had fought against brother, son against father. In the famine women had eaten their own children; people had killed and been killed for a sack of grain. So far as unlimited state power could achieve this objective, there had been a complete reversal of moral values. All the things that were held in highest official esteem before the war—the Tsar, the Orthodox Church, Russian nationalism—were now despised and derided. The mob was still being given its revolutionary circuses; just before we arrived in Moscow there had been trials of a group of leading Socialist Revolutionaries (members of one of the most important prewar revolutionary parties), and also of a number of ecclesiastics of the Orthodox Church.

Marriage, formerly dissolved only with difficulty because of the canons of the Church, was now treated as a "petty bourgeois prejudice" and could be terminated without any formalities, at the will of either partner. Sexual promiscuity of men and women alike was encouraged by the shocks and dislocations of revolution, civil war, and famine. Perhaps the most striking symbol of the reversal of prewar values was the custom, at Communist party congresses, of reckoning up the number of years which each

member had spent in prison under the Tsar, the man with the longest recorded term receiving the greatest honor.

Not all the tints in the picture of Russia in 1922 were dark. The country was visibly recovering from the rawest wounds of social upheaval and civil war. There was no more fighting, and the amazing resilience of the peasantry had produced a fairly good harvest in 1922 after the catastrophe of the preceding year. The New Economic Policy (generally referred to as Nep), with its substitution of a fixed tax in kind for the previous system of arbitrary requisitions, and its freedom of internal private trade, had revived the peasant's will to work. Indeed, food was more plentiful and of better quality during the first years of the Nep than it was when I left Russia almost twelve years later. While most middle-aged Russians were bitter, apathetic, or cynical in their attitude toward the Soviet regime, the younger generation was already feeling more at home in the new world which was growing up, even though it had not been so dogmatically drilled in communism as was the case later on. And there was a conscious effort on the part of the Communist party to mold the country along the new lines which I had theoretically approved in America.

My first reactions to this huge epic drama of the Russian Revolution, where the experiences of almost any individual, in the hands of a skillful author, could have furnished the theme of a novel or a drama, were confused and fragmentary. I lacked the mental make-up of the perfect Communist believer, able to shout "Hallelujah" with equal enthusiasm after two completely contradictory decisions by the higher party authorities. First-hand contacts with living Russia naturally revealed many flaws in the new pattern of which I had scarcely thought when I was writing my surreptitious enthusiastic articles as A. C. Freeman. (Incidentally, I continued to use this pseudonym until my attitude definitely changed in 1924. I once took a rather boyish delight in giving the inquiring Communist reporter of a Kharkov newspaper two interviews, one as the representative of the "bourgeois-liberal" *Christian Science Monitor*, the other as the revolutionary A. C. Freeman. In the first I expressed discreetly favorable impressions; in the second I let myself go with all my New York fervor, denounced American reaction, and even voiced the pious hope that the American workers would soon follow the example of their Russian comrades.)

I recall three outstanding unfavorable impressions which I received during these first months in Russia. The first was the horrible vulgarity of the Nep, the extremely unprepossessing types, more like pigs than human beings, which burgeoned forth as the new parvenu class after the restrictions on private trade were withdrawn.

The second was the endless red tape which surrounded the simplest operation, such as buying a railway ticket, the number of stamps which had to be affixed to all sorts of documents. As a general rule my temper is rather phlegmatic and placid; but nothing is so calculated to make me depart from this general rule as the puffed-up arrogance of the small official, in any country, taking a sadistic pleasure in his power to delay, obstruct, and annoy. There was an enormous amount of this sort of thing in Soviet Russia. Bureaucracy had always flourished as a rank luxuriant growth under the Tsars; but it had spread and multiplied since a revolution that had given the state so many economic functions to fulfill. Moreover, the Tsarist bureaucrats were at least tolerably educated—which could not be said of many of their Soviet successors.

The Nep, I tried to discount as something temporary; the bureaucracy, as an inevitable inheritance from the Russian past which Communist leaders, from Lenin down, were constantly denouncing. My third bad impression was somewhat harder to dispose of.

It was concerned with the personal qualities of many of the members of the Communist party with whom I came into contact. In America, on the basis of the reports of such favorable early observers of the Soviet regime as Arthur Ransome, H. N. Brailsford, and M. Philips Price, I had envisaged the Communist party as an elite ruling class. I recognized that it was exercising a dictatorship, but felt that this was justified first by the emergency of revolution and civil war, secondly by the difficulty of building up socialism in a backward peasant country.

With the callousness of youth (it is the younger generation that gives the greatest measure of faith and support to all the regimes which promise a millennium at the end of a terrorist road) I accepted, far too lightly, as I now think, the espionage, oppression, and suffering which dictatorship implies; but with the enthusiasm of youth I imagined a dictatorship of idealists, of men

whose ruthlessness would be redeemed and offset by absolute devotion to their cause. There were such men and women, many of them, in Russia at that time, mostly among the veteran revolutionaries of prewar times. Whenever I met one I would feel strengthened in my own original faith.

But there was also a host of careerists and adventurers who had flocked into the Communist ranks because they sniffed the loaves and fishes of power. In Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" there is a passage in which Huck, disillusioned about a self-styled "king" and "duke" who join him in his journey, remarks:

"It didn't take me long to make up my mind that these liars warn't no kings nor dukes at all, but just low-down humbugs and frauds."

This was exactly how I came to feel about many Communists, especially those in the middle ranks of the party. The old revolutionaries at the top, the manual workers at the bottom of the Communist hierarchy contained a large proportion of honest and devoted men. But the decimation of the prewar Russian educated class by the Revolution paved the way for the emergence of a swarm of adventurers and jobholders who were interested in communism merely as a means of getting on in the world and were as different as is conceivable from the idealists who faced persecution in Tsarist times for the sake of their revolutionary ideas.

One man of this type in the Narkomindel (Commissariat for Foreign Affairs) always impressed me as a peculiarly offensive representative of this careerist type. His manner varied from bumptious arrogance to cringing servility, depending on the amount of power and influence which he associated with the person with whom he was dealing. He had done nothing whatever for the Revolution except to run away from Russia to avoid military service in the World War. But he was cunning enough to be primed with the proper answers when one of the periodic party purges, designed to eliminate unfit members, was under way. He also learned very quickly the first law of Communist self-preservation, always to agree with the Central Committee (in later years this impersonal façade was more and more openly replaced by Stalin's purely personal dictatorship) and to denounce any traces of heresy in any other member of the party. Thus possessed of the proper passport for success under the Soviet or under any other dictatorship, he rose steadily in prestige and position while other,

far more honest, revolutionaries were banished, imprisoned, or shot.

After this particular specimen of the Communist successful jobholder had passed out of my range of observation, I was impressed by the meteoric rise of another Soviet Foreign Office official with whom I was in occasional contact. Of all the officials in his department this man was universally recognized by foreigners who dealt with it as the most unpleasant and despicable. For one thing he was the most complete pathological liar I have ever known. If he had ham and eggs for breakfast he would tell an inquirer that his menu consisted of waffles. When I learned of his appointment to a very high diplomatic post outside of Russia it was with great difficulty that I refrained from sending him a copy of Cardinal Newman's "Apologia pro Vita Sua," with the thundering passage near the end denouncing the sin of lying heavily underscored. But he was the kind of man to get on in the Stalinite world, while many of his colleagues, more serious and genuine revolutionaries, were picked off during the merciless succession of increasingly sanguinary purges.

But this is looking ahead. Despite the doubts and reservations which I began to feel, I remained basically sympathetic with the Soviet regime during my first two periods in Russia, from August until November, 1922, and from May until September, 1923. The strong weight of favorable prepossession naturally affected my judgment in many cases. When I made my first trip into the Russian countryside, visiting a district near the Ural Mountains, the fiery declamation of a Communist who had been sent into the district from outside counted more heavily with me than the general poverty and misery and disorganization and the depressed mood of the great majority of the peasants.

When we went to Kharkov, where some of Sonya's relatives were living, I was most strongly impressed by the fact that a Communist former worker was managing a large electrical factory in the city. I did not pause to examine very closely how efficiently he was managing it. The practice of rechristening factories with such names as "Red October," "Red Giant," "Proletarian Labor," "Victory of October" appealed to me as much as it would have exasperated their former owners. The unmistakable fact of an immense social upheaval, reflected in the spectacle of former weavers managing textile mills, former locksmiths acting as gov-

ernors of provinces, former revolutionary journalists supervising large industrial and trade enterprises, I accepted as desirable in itself.

It was a long time before I ceased to feel a certain lift at the sound of a band blaring out the "Internationale" or the sight of a workers' parade with its red flags, inscribed with slogans. When I found myself on the famous Red Square on November 7, fifth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, I remembered the many campaigns of the civil war which I had followed with so much sympathy for the Red cause in New York and forgot some of the less desirable sides of life under the new dispensation. Moreover, without knowing at that time of Trotzky's theory of permanent revolution, I clung to the hope that the Russian Revolution would be strengthened and made more complete by new successful social revolts in Europe and in Asia. My general attitude remained so favorable that a disillusioned Indian Communist, in the course of a discussion, remarked with some acidity:

"You are more orthodox than Zinoviev.<sup>1</sup> He has doubts. You have none."

During my first months in Russia I saw and heard the two chief leaders of the Revolution, Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin<sup>2</sup> and Leon Trotzky. As a journalist I was able to attend the fourth Congress of the Communist International,<sup>3</sup> where Lenin delivered a report on the experiences of the Soviet Union under the Nep. There was about Lenin a simplicity, an absence of the faintest trace of affectation or self-consciousness that reflected the vast inner self-confidence of the man. He was completely absorbed and swallowed up in the Marxian dogma on the truth of which he had not hesitated to stake his own and tens of millions of other lives.

Two traits that marked him off from contemporary dictators were his unconcern with theatrical effect and his remarkable willingness to admit mistakes. The latter trait, I think, was attributable to his absolute conviction of the infallibility of his basic

<sup>1</sup> Gregory Zinoviev, one of Lenin's oldest disciples, was then President of the Communist International. He was shot in 1936, after the first of the three great trials in which Stalin exterminated the majority of the surviving prominent old Bolsheviks.

<sup>2</sup> Lenin's first name is often incorrectly given as Nikolai. This is because he occasionally signed articles in prerevolutionary years N. Lenin and it was assumed that the N, a mere indefinite initial, stood for Nikolai.

<sup>3</sup> This was the last Congress of the International at which foreign journalists enjoyed this privilege.



idea, his Gospel according to St. Marx. Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini, essentially personal dictators, must put forward the most expansive claims to infallibility in order to mask an inner consciousness of weakness.

Strong in his armor of faith, convinced that Marx was an infallible prophet whose teaching must ultimately be realized, Lenin on the occasion when I heard him, as in many other speeches and writings, was willing to make the frankest admissions of failure and inadequacy as regards immediate details of his scheme. He spoke in German fairly fluently, although he occasionally borrowed an unfamiliar word from one of the delegates, and his style of delivery was rather dry and unemotional. It suggested a professor's lecture rather than a call to world revolution. This austere style was the natural reflection of a life which, before the giddy leap to power in 1917, had been largely spent in libraries and studies. The fierce, passionate power of the man, not so visible when I saw him in life, was brought home with irresistible force when I saw him dead, the face hardened in tense lines, one hand clenched as if in a last struggle to retain the reason which had departed before life itself left him.

Trotsky I saw at a collective interview which he granted to foreign journalists. He was in military uniform, the symbol of the post of Commissar for War which he would lose soon after Lenin's death. He conveyed the impression of possessing a mind more agile than Lenin's, quicker to throw out brilliant phrases, more fertile in original ideas; but, along with this, one felt the suggestion of a temperament more brittle and less stable. Here, one felt, was a man who might win a revolution by a stroke of improvised genius and lose it through a fit of misplaced temperament, of too obstinate adherence to a doctrinaire idea.

Stalin at this time was a legend rather than a flesh-and-blood being. "Lenin trusts Stalin; Stalin trusts no one," was a common saying. Those who were initiated in Communist party politics knew of the immense power which this olive-skinned son of a Georgian shoemaker was already wielding behind the scenes in his office as General Secretary of the Communist party. From this point of vantage he controlled the appointment and shifting of local Communist party functionaries, accumulated dossiers of material on every prominent individual Communist, "made" the elections to party congresses which would be packed with his

henchmen. Few foreigners, either Communists or non-Communists, appreciated Stalin's significance at this time. With typically Asiatic suspiciousness he made it a point to shut himself off from all foreign contacts.

Our first stay in Russia was broken by a period of a few months in Germany. This was the era of inflation, when the dollar was already buying thousands of German marks and would soon buy millions. Foreigners could live comfortably in Germany on almost nothing, and German bitterness over the lost war was correspondingly enhanced. I spent all the time in Berlin, except for trips to the Ruhr and the Rhineland, while Sonya took advantage of the opportunity to go to Paris and resume studies at the Sorbonne which had been interrupted by the outbreak of the World War.

I enjoyed this German interlude very much. The solid comfort of Berlin, which had survived all the shocks of war, was refreshing after the chaotic inconveniences of Moscow. It suggested a warm bath after a hot and exhausting day. My early interest in German history and literature and music predisposed me to like Berlin. After America, where street names rarely suggest associations, it was inspiring to walk on Goethestrasse, Schillerstrasse, Kantstrasse, Rankestrasse, Steinplatz. I reveled in the operas of Wagner and in some of the works of Beethoven and Weber which I had never seen in America. The boyhood days when I had toiled over von Raumer and acquired some conception of the romantic side of the Middle Ages, the hours in the Philadelphia Public Library, the concerts at the Academy of Music gave me more than the average foreign visitor's feeling for the Cologne Cathedral and the castles on the Rhine, for Weimar, with its fragrant memories of Goethe and Liszt, and for the superb pile of the Wartburg.

But my main interest was in contemporary politics and economics. My spoken German was halting and imperfect, but I read the press assiduously, from the semi-fascist *Deutsche Zeitung* to the Communist *Rote Fahne*. There was perhaps never in any country at any time so much unrestrained freedom of speech as Germany enjoyed then. The most violent attacks on the Republic, including very thinly veiled incitements to revolt, appeared constantly in the newspapers of the extreme right and the extreme left. Despite the defeat of the insurrections in 1919, 1920, and 1921,

Communism remained the political faith of a strong minority of the German workers.

The beginnings of National Socialism were also plainly visible. Violent anti-Semitic publications were to be found in every kiosk. Postwar German anti-Jewish feeling had grown partly because of the unreasoning bitterness of defeat, partly because Jews, many of them newly arrived fugitives from eastern Europe, were playing a prominent part in the speculation of an inflation period which was ruining and bankrupting the solid old German middle class. Somehow it was usually a Jew from whom one could buy depreciated marks at a street-corner rate somewhat more advantageous than that of the bank. This anti-Semitic nationalism, however, had not yet achieved disciplined cohesion. It was a state of mind, rather than a political force. Hitler was only one of a dozen competing "Führers."

Such friends as F. C. N. Jahn, a very cultivated and highly educated German who was then in the Berlin bureau of the United Press (an American news agency), and M. Philips Price, British left-wing writer and journalist, helped me to understand the details of German politics. Price had been in Russia during the most critical months of the Revolution, in 1918, and I had read his description of this stirring period with eager interest and sympathy. He was still, like myself, a Communist sympathizer and had just missed election to Parliament in his native constituency as a Communist by a narrow margin. With a delightful sense of humor he confided to me that he received more votes as the son of a local squire than because of his Marxist approach to the issues of the election. A sense of humor is seldom compatible with the prolonged maintenance of a fanatical faith. I was not surprised to learn some years later that Price had broken off with the Communist movement and joined the Labor party.

The overshadowing event in Germany at the time of our stay was the French occupation of the great industrial and mining district of the Ruhr. In 1939 it seems very strange and far-away, this unopposed march of French and Belgian troops into Germany. Another bizarre feature, in the light of later developments, was Mussolini's participation in the occupation.

Sonya and I visited the Ruhr when the passive resistance was at its height, with the mines and factories almost completely idle. The German instinct for discipline and respect for military force

made the occupation less productive of incidents and reprisals than it might have been in a country where the people are more impulsive. But the German resistance inevitably produced its martyrs and victims: there were some executions for sabotage; much larger numbers of the Ruhr workers were expelled and arrived as penniless refugees in the unoccupied part of Germany.

While there was substantial agreement in supporting the policy of nonco-operative passive resistance, the German reactions to the occupation varied according to political sympathies. Among conservatives and nationalists the dominant feeling was one of impotent rage, of desire to fight combined with the realization that there was not the slightest chance of victory. The middle-of-the-road groups which desired to preserve the Republic were profoundly pessimistic, foreseeing that the struggle would strengthen the extremism which threatened the existing regime from two sides. The exhaustion of national resources, the increase in impoverishment, the aggravation of inflation through the printing of new money to subsidize the Ruhr strikers and fugitives were all calculated to enhance the psychology that nothing was to be lost through violent change.

The Communist viewpoint, which I shared, was that the Ruhr occupation opened up new prospects for the checked and suppressed German social revolution. The German Communists reckoned that the occupation would convince not only the workers, but a large part of the middle class that the insatiable and impossible reparation demands could only be successfully opposed through revolution. And the prospect of Soviet military aid might reconcile normally conservative nationalists to the idea of revolution under Communist auspices.

German developments were followed with close attention in Moscow. Karl Radek, who had slipped into Germany incognito immediately after the end of the World War, only to witness the crushing of the left-wing uprisings in January and March and the killing of the three outstanding German revolutionary leaders, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, and Leo Jogisches, again succeeded in evading the surveillance of the German police and making an unauthorized visit to Germany. Radek was a Galician Jew with a cosmopolitan background who spoke eight or ten languages with an atrocious accent, read omnivorously and was, with the possible exception of Trotzky, the most brilliant of Bolshevik

polemicists. His keen biting articles were oases of relief in the dreary desert of the Soviet official press until he became too deeply involved in the real or imaginary Trotzkyist plots against Stalin. He has now disappeared into some obscure place of exile, although he saved his life by lodging denunciations, quite probably false ones, against Marshal M. N. Tukhachevsky and the other Soviet generals who were shot in 1937.

In 1923 Radek was considered the German revolutionary expert of the Communist party and he was entrusted with the mapping out of the strategy of the revolutionary outbreak which was hoped for as the final result of the occupation of the Ruhr. One interesting experiment which he launched—unsuccessfully, however—was that of co-operation with the extremists of the right. A German nationalist named Schlageter, who had fought against Communist and Socialist insurgents in the years after the World War, had been captured and shot by the French while engaged in a mission of sabotage in the Ruhr.

Striking a melodramatic gesture, Radek, on behalf of the Communist “soldiers of the revolution” saluted “Schlageter, the brave soldier of the counterrevolution.” The disadvantage of this tactic of promoting rapprochement between Communists and Fascists was that Communists might become Fascists as easily as Fascists could be converted to Communism. And, despite Radek’s effort to exploit the intense nationalism, not unmixed with social radicalism, which flamed up as a reaction to the Ruhr occupation, the Communists failed to win the overwhelming mass support which would have given a revolt prospects of success.

Sonya and I went back to Russia in the spring of 1923 and remained there until the autumn. Most of this time was spent in a long trip which took us to some of the most romantic and colorful parts of the country, to the Caucasus, with its patchwork of Oriental nationalities against a background of noble mountains, far higher, grander, and wilder than the Swiss Alps, to the old deserts and oases of Central Asia.

About this trip there is the nostalgic aroma, half sweet, half bitter, which one associates with a visit to a vanished land. For the places which we then saw for the first time have changed beyond recognition during the last two decades. The towns have swelled in unwieldy fashion. Old landmarks have been submerged by the jerry-built houses and wooden barracks which have grown

up about the new factories. Native costumes have given way to the shoddy products of mill and factory. A water tank, sanitary but unsightly, rears itself in front of the old walled palace of Bokhara. During later visits to the same regions I could see how processes of centralization, uniformity, and leveling were destroying the individuality of the national regions of the Soviet Union.

But in 1923, despite the storms of revolution and civil war (some of its more sanguinary episodes occurred in remote districts), the physical face of the country had not been greatly changed. We started out on the trip with Margaret Bryant, an English journalist whom we had recently met. She was a typical British liberal, not in the party sense of the word, and her cool, level-headed reactions sometimes acted as an antidote to the heady enthusiasm with which we were still inclined to view Soviet achievements. Once a glib spokesman for the Commissariat of Nationalities painted a glowing picture of what the Soviet regime was doing for the primitive tribesmen of the steppes and deserts, notably in helping the nomads to "settle down." Miss Bryant took some of the glamour out of this with the matter-of-fact comment:

"Our colonial administrators are also very anxious to have the nomads settle down. They are so much easier to handle after they cease roaming about."

Miss Bryant supplied introductions to heads of local co-operatives while Sonya contributed her facility with the Russian language. Our first visit was to Nizhni Novgorod. How much more sonorous is that good old Russian name than the town's present name of Gorky, in honor of Stalin's author-laureate. Here the head of the co-operatives, a Communist of moderate and intelligent views (I hope he escaped subsequent purges), entertained us with old-fashioned Russian hospitality in his house on the high bluff which overlooks the confluence of the Volga and Oka rivers. Then we boarded a Volga River steamer and experienced the sensation of drifting from Europe into Asia on the placid waters of the Russian Mississippi. For Nizhni Novgorod was on the racial frontier between the provinces with a pure Russian population and those with a large admixture of Eastern peoples—Tartars, Bashkirs, Mordvians, Chuvashes, and others.

Lacking the scenic variety and the innumerable historical associations of such European rivers as the Rhine and the Danube, the Volga possesses an irresistible charm of its own, suggestive

of the ocean or the desert. As we went farther east and south the scenery, especially on the left bank, became steadily more Asiatic, with camels often silhouetted against arid landscapes.

On the boat one could see the class lines which were beginning to form in the Soviet Republic. In the comfortable first-class cabins were party and Soviet officials, a permanent upper class (although its individual members were not infrequently "liquidated") and Nepmen, a transitory wealthy class. On the lower deck, sprawled about, munching black bread, cracking sunflower seeds, discussing, playing cards, nursing children, were the peasants, whose position at the bottom of the Russian social pyramid had not changed.

The first break in the river journey was at Kazan. Its minarets marked it as an old Tartar capital, and one could see from the river the high tower from which, according to a legend, a Tartar princess had leaped to her death when she saw the Russians under Ivan the Terrible entering the city. Kazan had acquired more recent historical importance. It was near this town that Trotzky had reorganized the shattered Red Army in the summer of 1918 into an effective fighting force. The recapture of Kazan marked the turn of the tide in the Russian civil war.

The head of the co-operatives there—a militant Communist and a Red Army veteran—told us that in 1919 he had been sure the world revolution was at hand. We were still predisposed to respond quickly to such enthusiasm. And Sonya, under the stimulus of Comrade Gall's eloquence and the temptation to tease Miss Bryant, delivered an exuberant speech at a little meeting which was held in our honor. She contrasted the supposedly happy lot of the Tartars and other non-Russian peoples under Soviet rule with the sad plight of the downtrodden masses in India and other colonial countries.

Miss Bryant left us at Samara, the next large town, to return to Moscow; but we went on to the Caucasus. We had one very valuable experience in traveling on a fourth-class railway car (no other accommodation was available) from Tsaritsin<sup>1</sup> on the lower Volga to a station on the main line of the railway from Moscow to the Caucasus. This car lacked the hard tiers of shelves on which passengers in Russian third-class cars sleep. There was just a wooden bench around the sides of the car. The passengers either

<sup>1</sup> Since then renamed Stalingrad.

sat up and dozed on the bench or stretched out on sheepskin coats or other moderately soft objects in the open space in the middle of the car. The atmosphere, as may be imagined, was not that of an American air-conditioned car.

On this bumpy ride, enlivened by whispers about possible bandit attacks—for remnants of the White armies and irregular bands of the civil war were still roaming about the region—we received a good lesson in agrarian economics from the peasants' standpoint. Our neighbor on the crowded bench was a Cossack farmer who gave us the most intelligent coherent account of peasant grievances we had heard: the high taxes in kind, the great disproportion between the high prices of manufactured goods and the low price of grain, the persecution of religion, the arbitrariness of the local Soviet officials. This picture of rural conditions did not fit in with our preconceptions, but it was convincing enough to make a lasting impression; and we found abundant confirmation when we set out to see the country districts for ourselves.

This was before the time of conducted trips for foreign tourists, of whom there were, indeed, practically none in Russia until several years later. So we were thrown on our own resources in making travel arrangements and finding accommodations. This system was infinitely better from the standpoint of learning something about Soviet psychology and conditions, although at times it was wearing on the nerves.

I fell in love with the Caucasus from the moment when I saw the Terek, one of the swiftest and clearest of mountain streams, foaming through the former garrison town of Vladikavkaz, the northern gateway of the massive main range of the Caucasus. Of all the regions of the Soviet Union it is the one which I should most like to see again. One thought of Russia's romantic poets, Pushkin and Lermontov, and of Tolstoy when one saw the mountain tribesmen in huge wool hats and jackets with small outside pockets conveniently cut in the shape of cartridges swaggering down the streets of Vladikavkaz.

The good old customs of blood feuds and banditry were still in full flower. A Russian family which entertained us in Vladikavkaz told us that it was the custom to select a member of some particularly warlike tribe to sit alongside the chauffeur on trips into tribal territory. His presence was a kind of insurance against



attack from ambush, because his death would bring down on his assailants an angry hornets' nest of revengeful fellow clansmen.

With several fellow travelers, Soviet officials and employees on holiday, we chartered a rickety automobile and set out on the Georgian military highway which runs across one of the main passes through the mountains. The scenery was gorgeous: huge overhanging rocks in the Daryal Gorge, mountain pastures as we mounted higher, glimpses of Kazbek and other snowy peaks through the clouds. One could see a remarkable diversity of racial types, Mongolian, Turkish, Greek, in the faces of the shepherds whom we passed. The deep inaccessible ravines of the Caucasus have been a depository for stragglers from conquering armies and migratory hordes since the dawn of history. It sometimes happens that a tribe in one valley does not understand the language of its neighbors in the next.

The descent was not without occasional qualms. The automobile was not in the best of repair; the chauffeur was an unknown quantity; and the giddy drops below the hairpin bends did not look inviting in the growing dusk, especially after we had pulled up once on the very edge of the precipice, after rattling into a loose barrier of stones. However, we reached the shelter of a mountain village without disaster. The following day we drove into Tiflis, the fascinating old capital of Georgia, set in a pocket of hills, with the river Kura flowing through it. Here were many races of the Near East and their handiwork in brass and silver: Georgians, proud, fiery and indolent; Mohammedan Tartars from Azerbaijan; Armenians, the traders and handicraftsmen of the Near East. To put it mildly, these three races did not get on well with one another, and the record of civil war in the Caucasus was complicated by sanguinary feuds among the Caucasian peoples themselves and between the Caucasians and the Russians. Now they had all been brought under Soviet rule; but Georgia was especially restless, and the Georgian Cheka (here even the name of the dreaded terrorist police had not yet been changed to Gay-Pay-Oo) was kept busy with arrests and executions.

We made a side trip to Erivan, the capital of the part of Armenia which had found a shelter from Turkish conquest by joining the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Here the flat roofs, the houses built out of sun-baked clay conveyed an especially strong sense of an Asiatic town. From the plateau around Erivan one could

see the beautiful proportions of Ararat, which, I think, ranks with Japan's Fujiyama as one of the two most perfectly shaped mountains in the world. After spending a few days in Baku, the largest city of the Caucasus, with a mixed population of Russians, Tartars, and Armenians, where the work of putting into operation the extensive oil wells, neglected and deserted during the Revolution, was just beginning, we crossed the Caspian Sea and entered the mysterious lands of Inner Asia.

Starting from Krasnovodsk, we traveled by train across the vast Karakum desert. There was something immensely old and timeless, like the ocean, about the sand dunes that stretched out to the limit of the horizon. Even revolution seemed powerless against the unchanging desert. One of our longer stops was at Ashkhabad, near the frontier of Persia. Some of our train acquaintances (Russians are naturally expansive and talkative with strangers when they are not too badly frightened by the secret police) had warned us about a distressing peculiarity of the town's water supply. It was infected with parasites, so that even a wash with unboiled water was accompanied by the risk of having one's face or hands slowly eaten away. "The delectable baths of Ashkhabad" became a sort of joking byword with us.

Bokhara was far more striking and distinctive than when I saw it seven years later in the course of a trip to see the opening of the Turkestan-Siberia Railway. In 1923 it was still a museum piece of old Asia, with women shrouded in shapeless veils of black horsehair and men in flowing robes, riding astride little donkeys or sitting in the shade of old walls, spitting more or less surreptitiously to indicate disapproval of the presence of an infidel foreigner within their holy city. In the vast bazaar one could find marvelously fragrant long grapes, beautifully woven rugs, brightly colored skullcaps, and many other Oriental luxuries. The city was also full of stagnant pools of water, coated with green scum, which the people used for want of anything better, thereby contracting a variety of unusual diseases.

There was an atmosphere of biblical times about this city, which for centuries had been one of the famous trade marts on the caravan routes of Central Asia and a center of fanatical Mohammedanism. I have always been sensitive to the influence of anything that is old, whether in Europe or in Asia; and for a week we reveled in the sheer antiquity of Bokhara.

Not that it had missed the impact of social upheaval. The Red Army in 1920 had battered down its walls with artillery, and the Amir who had formerly ruled the country under a Russian protectorate had fled into neighboring Afghanistan. The whole situation in Bokhara in 1923 was very similar to that of Manchuria or north China in the first years of the Japanese occupation. The Soviet regime was established in the main towns and along the railway lines; but the country districts bristled with Basmachi, as the insurgent bands were called. An Ukrainian Jew had organized a Bokharan Red Army, which was quite similar to the Japanese-organized army which I later found in Manchoukuo, since it was very liable to mutinies and desertions.

At this time, however, my will to believe was still strong, and I passed with flying colors the test of an address which, as a foreign visitor, I was asked to make at a rather ragged review of the Bokharan Red warriors. All I remember of this talk was the conclusion:

“Long live the Bokharan Red Army! Long live the Russian Red Army! Long live the Red East!”

The interpreter who had been provided for the occasion was a Russian intellectual with an undistinguished personality, apart from his excellent knowledge of a number of European and Oriental languages. He ejaculated a heartfelt “Splendid” after my vigorous if not very original peroration. To himself he was probably wondering mildly whether I should be set down as a fool or a knave. But I had spared him the necessity of resorting to his imagination when he undertook to render my remarks in Russian.

Framed against the old Asiatic background of Bokhara were two interesting Communist types. I forget their exact offices, but both were in the small group of amateur colonial administrators who had been sent from Moscow to help rule Bokhara. One of them, Sokolov by name, seemed to me to come as close to my ideal of the Communist “elite” as anyone I ever met in Russia. A Bolshevik since his student days, a veteran of several fronts in the civil war, he and his wife lived as simply and unpretentiously as if they had still been poor students. He was one of those Communists, a small and dwindling number, as I gradually came to realize, on whose character power exerted no corrupting influence. Here in Bokhara, where he had been sent by the party Central Committee, he was working night and day, trying to check the

abuses of the carpetbaggers who always appear on a new frontier, to understand the psychology and customs of the native Sarts and Uzbeks, to avoid unnecessary offense to their habits and prejudices in setting up a workable Soviet administration.

His associate, Fonstein, was a man of much coarser fiber and less attractive personality, although he was doubtless a tough, hard fighter in the civil war. Whereas Sokolov was quite frank in admitting difficulties and failures, Fonstein was a blatant booster who defeated his own propagandist aims by claiming far too much for a regime which, as even inexperienced visitors like ourselves could see, was obviously far from popular with the masses of the natives. After one harangue, which Sonya translated to me with some abbreviations, he remarked distrustfully that he was afraid we believed only half of what he was telling us. Sonya later privately observed:

“He is too optimistic if he thinks I believe half of it.”

Comrade Fonstein gave us one good illustration of the one-sided character of the propagandist mind. After boring us with long diatribes against world capitalism and predicting that the Russian Communists would lead the way to its destruction he turned to the subject of Soviet-American relations.

“It would be much better,” he said in a tone of severe moral censure, “if Mr. Hughes, instead of making his stupid speeches about nonrecognition, would send some blankets for the Bokharan Red Army.”

The incongruity of Mr. Hughes' thus coming to the aid of his sworn enemies did not seem to occur to him.

After Bokhara came Samarkand, the most beautiful city I have seen in Asia, with the exception of Peking. Indeed there is much in common between China's historic capital and the Central Asian city which Tamerlane enriched with the spoils of a continent. There is the same dry desert air, the same cloudless blue sky that harmonizes so well with the tiles of many of the buildings. One can find specimens of Chinese art and architecture in Samarkand, for the city, in its flourishing medieval days, was the meeting place of artificers and merchants from China, from India, and from Persia. We admired the Registan, which Lord Curzon considered the noblest public square in the world, faced as it is with three mighty mosques, of which the grandeur and beauty are still impressive, in spite of some damage that has been wrought by earth-

quakes and neglect. We saw Tamerlane's tomb, marked by a slab of black rare stone, with his dreaded horsetail standard hanging near by. Somehow the memory of the Earthshaker, as Tamerlane was called, of the pyramids of human heads that marked his victories, recurred to me in later years whenever I looked on the embalmed figure of Lenin, another "earthshaker" whose victories were perhaps as destructive of human life as were Tamerlane's.

Tashkent, the metropolis of Central Asia, was much more modern than Bokhara or Samarkand. Many of the Eastern women there had already discarded their veils. In the factories the Russian system of Communist propaganda and organization had been installed. One saw workers' clubs with their pictures of Lenin and Trotzky and their handwritten "wall newspapers." Tashkent, which had been the stronghold of the Bolsheviki in Central Asia during the civil war, naturally lacked both the incomparable old Asiatic atmosphere of Bokhara and the architectural glories of Samarkand.

From Tashkent we returned to Moscow; and we soon left Russia for a second visit to Germany. On the little Soviet steamer which took us from Petrograd to Kiel was a former Austrian war prisoner who had lived for many years in Turkestan. The Revolution impressed him as a tremendous event ("ein weltgeschichtliches Ereignis"), but he preferred to take his chance on living in his native Austria. About Germany he said, "Either fascism or communism *must* come: the people have suffered too much." He was right on the long view, but mistaken on the immediate prospect.

We also thought that the drama initiated by the occupation of the Ruhr might be approaching some great climax. We found in Germany a radically changed situation, despair and bitterness on every hand, the passive resistance in the Ruhr breaking down, small bills payable not in thousands but in millions of marks. The currency was sinking in a bottomless pit of inflation; distress and food shortage were far greater than they had been in the previous winter and spring.

In such an atmosphere surely "something must happen." But the German people at this time were like damp wood; they sputtered, but did not burst into flames. Mere despair was not enough; there was no revolutionary prophet with a sufficient following to impose his will on the country. I felt bitter disappointment when a Communist uprising in Hamburg was crushed after hard street

fighting. There still remained one more chance for social revolution.

The Social Democrats of Saxony, more inclined to the left than the party leadership, formed a bloc with the Communists which created a small majority in the Saxon Diet. A "Red" government, with two Communist Ministers, was formed. Twice I went down to Dresden to attend sessions of the Saxon Diet. The eighteenth century architecture of the city, suggestive of old courts and uniforms and balls, was in strange contrast to the proletarian revolution which seemed to be a possibility. But instead of revolution there was only anticlimax. Saxony was already hungry and could easily be starved out if it moved alone. The Communists had a large following in the adjoining state of Thuringia and in the Halle-Merseburg industrial district. But there was no real will to revolt, no atmosphere of Russia in 1917. (My skepticism about the German Communists as effective revolutionaries dated from the time when I attended their party congress in Leipzig early in 1923 and found "Bitte Ruhe" ("Quiet, please") the message which was most often addressed to the delegates.)

When Chancellor Stresemann ordered the left-wing government in Dresden to quit office it obeyed with only formal protests, foreshadowing the more fateful decision of the coalition Social Democratic regime in Prussia, the last bulwark of the Republic, when Hindenburg dismissed it in 1932. When the Reichswehr marched into "Red" central Germany to suppress possible revolts there was practically no resistance. All the rather ostentatious efforts at organizing *Hundertschaften*, or workers' guards, and buying arms proved to be only playing at revolution.

Extremism on the right also fizzled out with a few futile outbreaks, of which Hitler's beer-cellar Putsch was the most spectacular. The Reichswehr was strong enough to hold the country together and maintain order during the crisis. And the Dawes Plan, grossly fallacious as it was in its underlying conception that reparations and war debts could be paid, appeared like a *deus ex machina* to wind up the episode of the Ruhr occupation. It gave German capitalism a temporary lease on life which would come to an end soon after gullible American investors ceased to put their money into Germany without worrying over the ultimate insoluble problem of transfer.

The money on which we had gone to Russia was now largely exhausted. There seemed to be nothing to do except return to

New York, although I was far from cheerful about this prospect. Then chance, in the shape of a letter from the *Monitor*, came to the rescue. Losing a job sent me to Russia; getting a job enabled me to stay there. The *Monitor* liked the correspondence which I had sent about my wanderings in the Caucasus and Central Asia and accepted my suggestion to return to Moscow as a permanent correspondent. So, with barely enough money to pay our way but with keen anticipation of a new life of work and study in Russia, we took the Riga route back to Moscow in November, 1923. From a place of passage the Soviet capital was to become our home for the next ten years.

## CHAPTER FIVE: *Disenchantment and Neutrality*

*From a fairly extensive acquaintance with foreigners* (including returned Russians) during a period of almost twelve years in Moscow I would say that nine out of ten became more negative in their attitude after having lived a reasonable length of time in the country. And this process of psychological change, so far as I could see, did not proceed along any recognizable class line. I have found just as many believers turned skeptics among manual workers as among intellectuals, among persons born in Russia as among native Americans and other foreigners. It has happened again and again that persons with the strongest reasons for trying to adjust themselves to Soviet life, Communists, Anarchists, labor radicals who had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment in their native countries, became so disgusted with Soviet moral and material conditions that they were willing to do almost anything to get out of the "proletarian fatherland." Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, the Yugoslav Communist Ciliga, the American Gastonia strikers—these are only a few of a host of examples which could be cited in this connection.

This might suggest to an open and inquiring mind that perhaps certain objective facts of Soviet life as well as subjective idiosyncrasies of foreign visitors to Russia enter into the making of such a generally unfavorable composite reaction. Naturally the process of changing one's mind about Russia proceeds at a different pace with different individuals. One of the most rapid and complete right-about faces I have witnessed was that of a brilliant young English novelist and critic named Malcolm Muggeridge. He arrived in Moscow as correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* in



1932 effervescing with Soviet sympathies, disgusted with the "petty bourgeois liberalism" of the *Guardian*. Within a few months his writings had become so mordantly critical that the *Guardian* was unwilling to print them, and when he left Russia altogether the conservative *Morning Post* showed the most willingness to publish his impressions.

Muggeridge had the quick volatile reactions of the artistic temperament. I needed a much longer time to achieve a complete change of front. The first stage in my evolution was not a swift transformation of enthusiasm into hostility. It was a deliberate, almost imperceptible shift to an attitude which might be summed up in two words: disenchantment and neutrality. My first two trips to Russia left me, on balance, a Communist sympathizer, although with a good many more doubts and reservations than I had felt before leaving America. I still remember a little shamefacedly some of my naïve first messages to the *Monitor* from Moscow, especially one in which I rashly accepted the word of a walrus-mustached Commissar for Justice that there were only two hundred political prisoners in Russia, and that these were lodged pretty comfortably in places where the climate, in the euphemistic words of the Commissar, "was clear although cold." But continued residence in the Soviet Union was a good cure for credulity. Some time in 1924 the last traces of partisanship slipped away, and I no longer experienced even an unconscious desire to report developments from the standpoint of an apologist.

I do not think there was any single incident that marked a decisive turning point in my attitude. My change of viewpoint came about rather as the result of a combination of causes, all operating with the gradual but sure effect of water wearing away a stone. For one thing, the tribe of Communist bureaucrats did not become less numerous or more attractive on closer acquaintance.

The controversy between Trotzky and the party Central Committee (Stalin's collective figleaf) was in full swing when we returned to Russia. Stalin's personal dictatorship was only in an early stage of consolidation. At that time one who was a Trotzkyist was not yet liable to summary arrest and deportation, with a fairly good chance of being shot.

But the methods which one could see in operation during this early phase of the controversy were quite destructive of the official fiction that discussion in the Communist party was free

until a decision was actually taken. Every kind of discrimination was practiced against the Trotzkyists in the opportunities given to submit their views to the consideration of the party rank and file. A gigantic spoils system came into operation. The comrade whose views always accorded with those of the Central Committee was sure of his desired appointment or promotion. The dissident was likely to find himself abruptly transferred from Moscow or Petrograd to some provincial backwater. Party discipline, the obligation of every Communist to obey unconditionally the orders which he received from the Central Committee, was unscrupulously abused for factional purposes.

I was not then and am not now a Trotzkyist sympathizer. At that time Trotzky, whom Stalin had already elbowed out of much of the vast power which he had enjoyed as War Commissar during the civil war, was posing as a champion of democracy within the Communist party. He was appealing to the party rank and file against the tyranny of the bureaucracy. His whole previous record, however, discounted the sincerity of this position. When he was Lenin's closest associate no one had been more contemptuous of the rights of opposition groups within or without the party, no one had been readier to resort to the methods of terrorist repression.

With his cosmopolitan European background, his range of scholarship and erudition, his mind, quick, agile, flashing, although histrionic, mercurial, and unstable, Trotzky was a more cultured and civilized individual than Stalin. Had he fallen heir to Lenin's succession the Soviet regime might have escaped the curse of drab mediocrity (in everything from the expression of thought to the preparation of food) which has been one of its most depressing characteristics.

On the other hand, Trotzky's imperious temperament, his inability to tolerate opposition would have most probably made his career as a dictator as sanguinary as Stalin's, although he might have offered more plausible and imaginative explanations of the slaughter of many of his former comrades. Trotzky's belief in the so-called permanent revolution, his conviction that the Russian Revolution could only, in the long run, triumph as part of a world upheaval might well have led him to precipitate Russia into a series of adventurous wars.

So my judgment of Communist practical politics was not colored by any special partisanship for Trotzky. It might rather have been

likened to that of a Christian believer, suddenly brought face to face with some of the less savory realities of the councils of Nice and Ephesus and Chalcedon. Just as the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in practice proved to be a dictatorship over the proletariat, so the actualities of government by a Communist elite proved disconcertingly reminiscent of the cruder types of boss politics in America.

As we lived longer in Russia we came more and more into touch with two classes of people whom we had scarcely known during our first visits: the intelligentsia and the peasants. We found friends among prewar writers, engineers, professors, journalists. These were not fallen aristocrats or expropriated bourgeoisie, sighing for vanished wealth and privileges. Many of our friends had taken part in the revolutionary movement before the war. The majority, I am sure, were happy when the autocracy fell.

I can recall only one former princess among our acquaintances. Incidentally, she accepted the blows of the Revolution with courage, resignation, and good sense, fortified as she was by a very deep and sincere faith in the Orthodox religion. She made the best possible use of her knowledge of foreign languages by giving lessons and undertaking translation work and burst out in delight, not altogether unmixed with humor, when she obtained, after long efforts, a trade-union card and the right to vote in Soviet elections. The last, to be sure, was of no practical political consequence. But it carried with it the right to work and some assurance against discrimination in rent assessments and social benefits.

The majority of our Russian friends would have been on the left rather than on the right, by the standards of American and European politics. But almost without exception they were strongly critical of the Soviet order. In our talks, contrary to the lurid fiction of Soviet sabotage trials, they did not rush to betray military secrets. Neither did they reveal any schemes for putting ground glass into the food of the proletariat or for infecting Red Army hospitals with bacilli. Incredible as it may seem to the naïve foreign Communist sympathizer who accepts the tales of the sabotage trials without even a pinch of salt, we lived in Russia almost twelve years without encountering any evidence of a desire on the part of engineers and technicians to wreck railway trains, destroy mines, and throw monkey wrenches into turbines.

What we did realize more and more keenly, as we lived longer in

Russia, was the discouraging dead weight of ignorance and incompetence installed in power. In America I had envisaged the Revolution as directed against parasitic classes which were living on the proceeds of other men's work. Living in Russia, I could not mistake the fact that the social upheaval had been very largely directed against the country's all too small educated class. Not only were many thousands of educated people slaughtered during the Terror and hundreds of thousands driven into permanent exile (the percentage of university graduates among the Russian émigrés is higher than in any population group in the world), but anyone with a good prewar education in the Soviet state service was treated as a semicriminal. Some Communist of red-blooded proletarian antecedents and often of very limited mental capacity would be set to spy on him and to train himself, if possible, to take over the job.

A stupid and humiliating system of class discrimination was in force in the universities and higher technical schools. Instead of accepting or rejecting applicants for admission on merit, an arbitrary system of selection was instituted under which large percentages of places had to go to children of workers and Communists, regardless of their educational qualifications. This system has now, I think, been largely done away with. But it lasted long enough to let loose on the country a horde of half- and quarter-educated "scientists," engineers, teachers, and what not. I was very strongly impressed by the senseless cruelty, the stupidity, from the interests of the Soviet state itself, of denying higher educational opportunity to children whose only crime was that their parents had received a good education.

This spirit of narrow-minded hatred and distrust of culture and intelligence ran through and poisoned every branch of Soviet life. I once asked a foreign research student what had been his experience with Russian scholars and Soviet archives.

"Don't confuse the two," he said with a smile and a shrug. "Russian scholars have been uniformly kind and helpful. But I never found a scholar in a responsible post in the archives."

Equally characteristic was the remark of a Russian friend that in his department there was a good deal of unnecessary overhead expense because the Communist party member who was the nominal executive required a man of experience and technical training to do much of the work for him.

"That seems to be one of our national habits," said the Russian's wife, with a smile. "Before the Revolution we often had in conspicuous posts incompetent princes and aristocrats who took the glory while some unknown persons in the background did the work."

I had no first-hand knowledge of old Russia. But again and again I would encounter convincing evidence of the grievous setback which the Revolution had given to Russian culture, at least on the qualitative side. A visit to Kiev, "Mother City of Russia," capital of one of the first organized Russian states and scene of the baptism of the Russians by Byzantine missionaries, was revealing in this connection.

I had gone to Kiev to study the local records of the course of the Revolution in this region. In the city archives I found a number of copies of the prewar newspaper *Kievskaya Misl*, which would have compared favorably with the best European newspapers in the breadth and quality of its foreign correspondence and in its excellent literary style. The contrast with the contemporary Soviet newspapers, badly printed little sheets, completely devoid of foreign news except for a few telegrams from Tass, the official Soviet news agency, and most conspicuously lacking in the witty feuilletons and intelligent book reviews and musical criticisms of the *Kievskaya Misl*, was overwhelming. It was the contrast between the *New York Times* and the *Gopher Prairie Tribune*. After this experience I could never read without a good many mental reservations the triumphant Soviet comparisons in the number of newspapers published between the Soviet Union and Tsarist Russia. For in quality no Soviet newspaper compares with the *Kievskaya Misl* or with a number of other prewar publications.

My historical researches led me unconsciously to another field of comparison. I conscientiously went through scores of issues of *Proletarskaya Revolutsiya* (*Proletarian Revolution*, the leading historical magazine published under the Soviets) and also read its émigré counterpart *Arkhiv Russkoi Revolutsii* (*Archive of the Russian Revolution*). The former was written by the more educated Communists; the latter, by the more educated émigrés. There were, of course, individual exceptions, but by and large the contrast was overwhelmingly in favor of the latter, as regards literary style, logic, and coherence of narrative. The contributors to *Proletarian Revolution* mostly seemed to suffer from what the psychologists define as "total recall": they burdened their reminiscences with

a mass of unimportant details, while often leaving obscure the most significant facts. All in all, the simultaneous reading of the two magazines suggested the difference between some crude Gothic chronicles of the Dark Ages and a civilized Roman history. And, not for the first time in history, the barbarians proved the stronger in the struggle which the two magazines described.

I have outlived a good many early enthusiasms; but my respect and admiration for the prewar Russian intelligentsia grew steadily while I lived in Moscow and has become a permanent feeling in my life. If I owed nothing else to my stay in Russia I should be grateful for the memory of acquaintanceships, some intimate, some fleeting, with this most humane, mellow, and civilized class of human beings. Again and again, when I observed the luminous thought, the range of mental interest and curiosity, the freedom from pedantry and narrowness that are characteristic of the educated Russians, I thought of Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov and his eloquent apostrophe to "those alien stones, those wonders of God's ancient world," the artistic and cultural heritage of Western Europe. I thought how young and fresh Russia was in the nineteenth century, and how a Russian, seeing Paris, Rome, or Munich for the first time, might well appreciate the treasures of these cities more warmly than Frenchmen, Italians, or Germans themselves.

The weaknesses of the Russian intelligentsia have been satirized, keenly and cleverly by such geniuses in their own ranks as Turgenev and Herzen and Chekhov and Goncharov, crudely and clumsily by the swarm of "proletarian" authors and playwrights, numerous in quantity and bad in quality, which emerged after the Revolution. Among these weaknesses were indecision, softness, impracticality. On how many Soviet stages have I seen the contrast driven home in heavy labored fashion between the wavering intellectual, despicably unwilling to kill anyone, and the sturdy proletarian, cheerfully ready to shed rivers of blood in order to reach the Marxist Paradise.

No doubt the Russian intelligentsia was poorly qualified to step into the shoes and adopt the methods of Ivan the Terrible. No doubt it was behind the corresponding class in America and in Western Europe in its sense of practicality. But the historical facts do not agree with the conception of the prewar intellectuals as a group of moon-struck dawdlers. It was they who gave Russia within a century a place in literature and in music alongside that

of countries with a much older cultural tradition. It was predominantly from the intellectuals that the pioneer idealistic revolutionaries who pitted themselves against the massive bulk of the autocracy were drawn. It was to this small educated class that Russia owed the creative achievements, intellectual and material, that made one think of it as a European rather than as an Asiatic country.

And if the intelligentsia proved unable to govern Russia during the short liberal interval between the March and November revolutions, if it fell between the two stools of embattled revolution and embattled counterrevolution during the civil war; this is by no means necessarily to its discredit, from the moral standpoint. Russia has unfortunately always been governed by a sinister mixture of brute force and cunning. Lenin unconsciously forecast the whole character of Stalin's regime when he described Stalin, very accurately, as a "rough and disloyal man." In the age of Stalin and Hitler and Mussolini, an age of blind and fundamentally absurd worship of violence, there is much to be said, I think, for individuals who, like the Russian intellectuals, were more ready to die than to kill for their ideals.

Two of my most vivid and most pleasant recollections of these first years in Moscow are of gatherings in which the old intelligentsia turned out in force. One of these was in honor of the author V. V. Veresaev, himself a very typical representative of prewar Russian radicalism in literature. His novel "V Tupike" (translated into English and published in 1928 under the title "The Deadlock") gives a very valuable picture, at once realistic and sympathetic, of the tragic spiritual dilemma of the Russian educated class during the civil war, when civilization and humanity seemed certain to lose, no matter which side won. (I am sure many Spanish liberals and radicals were confronted with the same problem during the recent civil war in that country.)

One of the speakers was Vera Figner, one of Russia's revolutionary saints, a member of the Narodnaya Volya (People's Liberty group) of the eighties. She had long ago retired from revolutionary activity, and was living in a home for old revolutionaries which was maintained by the Soviet Government. But on this occasion she spoke with a frankness which few Soviet citizens would have considered it safe to emulate. She referred to the "cellars of the Cheka" (a frequent place of execution during the civil war) with

a bitterness which showed how far the actual course of the Revolution had deviated from her ideals.

The other meeting was a celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Moscow Art Theater, probably the greatest theater in the world. In no country have I derived so much enjoyment from the theater as when I could see the mystical tragic actor Katchalov or the incomparable mimic Moskvín—to name only two figures in an ensemble that had been harmoniously developed by Stanislavsky—in some of the classical Russian dramas of Gogol, Ostrovsky, and Aleksei Tolstoy.

Here again one saw in the audience a predominance of intelligent, human, individual faces, not the kind of faces one was apt to see in Soviet offices or at Communist party congresses. And I joined in the applause as heartily as anyone when an erect elderly man (one instinctively thought of him as a gentleman, despite the incongruity of this term against the Soviet background) stepped out on the stage, along with other representatives of organizations which were paying their tributes to the Art Theater and laid down his wreath with the two words: "Staraya Moskva" ("Old Moscow"). He was a member of the society of this name, which was devoted to preserving the old historic and artistic monuments of the city. But the words evoked the memory of a vanished way of life, of an "old Moscow" which many of those present had strong, sometimes poignant reasons for regretting. The spontaneous burst of applause lasted for several minutes. I hope it involved no unpleasant consequences for the old Muscovite at the hands of the Gay-Pay-Oo.<sup>1</sup>

The Gay-Pay-Oo was a strong factor making for disenchantment. The years which I am describing, from 1923 until 1927, were relatively mild, compared both with those which had gone before and with those which were to come afterwards. Yet there was an appalling amount of routine espionage and of arbitrary cruelty. One gradually came to take it for granted that letters were habitually opened, that Russians in one's employment were obliged to

<sup>1</sup> Gay-Pay-Oo, a compound of the initial letters of the three Russian words which might be literally translated "state political administration," was the new name given to the Cheka, the terrorist political police organization during the civil war. While the name was changed, the active officials of the Cheka mostly continued to work in the Gay-Pay-Oo. The latter was formally abolished, or rather merged with the Commissariat for the Interior, in 1934; but its methods remained essentially unchanged.



turn in regular reports to the Gay-Pay-Oo, and that social contacts with Russians were distinctly dangerous for the latter.

One adapted oneself to circumstances, wrote nothing in letters to which exception could be taken,<sup>1</sup> imposed similar self-restraint in telephone conversations, and tried to carry on conversations with non-Communist Russians only in the strictest privacy, no matter how innocent the subject of the conversation might be. For foreigners who carried the passports of the larger countries the Gay-Pay-Oo was an annoyance rather than a threat. The most that might happen was that one might be expelled from the country on the basis of some false denunciation.

Very different was the position of the Russians. Even in the "mild" years there were repeated instances of ferocious terrorism. In 1924 there was an uprising in Georgia, where the Soviet regime had never been popular. Georgia had set up an independent moderate socialist government in 1917. The Soviet Government recognized its independence. Then, in a fashion which Nazi Germany was later to imitate, consciously or unconsciously, it stirred up internal trouble and invaded and conquered Georgia in 1921. The uprising of 1924 was not very serious; but the Soviet Georgian officials themselves admitted that hundreds of persons were shot after it was suppressed.

When I returned from a trip to England in 1925 it seemed at first rather good to be back among the familiar Russian sights and sounds and even smells. I noticed that Sonya seemed disturbed when she met me at the station; as we rattled over the cobbled streets in a droschky she told me the reason:

"Something terrible happened while you were away. An émigré in Paris made a foolish speech in which he said that the graduates of a certain well known Russian high school were still in Russia and were working for the émigré cause. The Gay-Pay-Oo arrested every graduate of this high school on whom they could lay their hands. Many of them were shot."

It was just at this time that the Soviet Government had invited

<sup>1</sup>I derived some personal amusement and possibly mystified the letter openers by habitually referring to the Soviet regime in terms of extravagant praise, parodying so far as I could, the style of the official newspapers, when I wrote to Sonya from abroad. I was in America when a group of British engineers were arrested in Russia on charges of sabotage and espionage in 1933; so I promptly wrote to Sonya that I was sure these counterrevolutionary vermin would break their teeth on the granite of the country that is building socialism—which sounds like arrant nonsense but could easily be duplicated in the Soviet press.

a number of distinguished foreign guests, including J. M. Keynes, to be present at the two hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Not even this circumstance placed any restraint on the Gay-Pay-Oo savagery, although the arrests and shootings were not mentioned in the Soviet press and the whole affair was hushed up so far as possible. There was no proof whatever of the guilt of the victims of this particular "purge," apart from the speech of an irresponsible exile in Paris.

After a Russian émigré had shot the Soviet Ambassador to Poland, Volkov, in 1927, twenty persons, none of whom had anything to do with the assassination, were put to death as a reprisal. Thousands of Russians were arrested and exiled after the breach of relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union in the same year. A touch of comedy was added to the last affair by the publication of an official statement to the effect that Mr. Waite of the British Consulate in Moscow had been scheming to blow up the Kremlin. Whatever may be the failings of British consuls, blowing up public buildings in the countries to which they are accredited is not one of them; and it is doubtful whether the quantity of high explosives in Moscow at this time would have been sufficient to blow up such a substantial piece of architecture as the Kremlin.

I saw much more of the Russian village than the average correspondent. The *Monitor* was more receptive than most newspapers would have been to mail articles describing the everyday life of the people and the new social and economic conditions in the countryside, and I scarcely let any year pass without at least one long trip into the vast Russian rural hinterland. Thanks to Sonya's native knowledge of Russian, I was able from the beginning to get on without benefit of interpreters living in the shadow of the Gay-Pay-Oo. At the time of our first trip, which took us to the steppe country of the lower Volga, the North Caucasus and Ukraina, I knew extremely little Russian and took along with me a single English book, Boswell's "Life of Johnson," which I read and reread during long evenings in smoky peasant huts and waits at railway stations. The result was an amusing jumble of homespun agrarian economics with such sturdy Johnsonian *obiter dicta* as:

"I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian." (An admirable sentiment, by the way, for the subjects of a modern dictatorship, if it could only be put into practice.)

"Sir, a woman preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

Later I was able to take a more active part in talking with the peasants myself, and I have always considered these trips as one of my most valuable sources of Russian information. They were without any element of official stage management or junketing. We simply picked out a promising region, obtained some conventional credentials from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and went off by ourselves. What we saw were not "Potemkin villages"<sup>1</sup> but real ones.

And closer familiarity with everyday life in the country districts, as in Moscow, did not make for greater admiration of the Soviet system. Before I came to Moscow I had considered the peasants, who at that time constituted about 80 per cent of the Soviet population, as supporters of the Soviet regime: first, because it had given them the land; secondly, because the White leaders had forfeited peasant support by trying to restore the landlord system. This was partly true, but was very far from being the whole truth, as I came to realize. First of all, the peasants felt that they had taken the land themselves; and Communist food requisitions at the point of the bayonet during the civil war had left as bitter memories as White efforts to bring back the landlords. Russia under the Tsars had never known such a terrible famine as that of 1921-1922, in the fourth year of the "workers' and peasants' government." And now, when the village was struggling to its feet after the prostration of civil war and famine, one found everywhere the same grievances: arbitrariness of the local Communist officials, high taxes, and a great change, to the disadvantage of the peasants, in the pre-war relative value of farm products and manufactured goods. The high prices and low quality of the latter were an inevitable result of the general inefficiency of the state industries.

In many regions one found a situation strongly suggestive of the carpetbag regimes which were set up in the South after the American Civil War. We happened to be in a Kuban Cossack village at the time of a Soviet election in 1924. Here the standard

<sup>1</sup> It is a widely accepted story that when the Empress Catherine the Great made her first trip to newly acquired Ukraine her favorite, Prince Potemkin, set up stage villages along the route of her progress to convince her of the wealth and prosperity of the region. Whether this particular story is true or not, the method which it illustrates has been an extremely popular one both in old and in new Russia.

of living had been quite high before the war (one was impressed by the many substantial, comfortable-looking houses and by the stone building of the prewar high school), and it was impossible to mistake the sullen embittered attitude of the majority of the people. The election took the form of an open-air meeting. Four of the toughest-looking individuals in the gathering, each with a revolver conspicuously strapped to his belt, stalked out in front and announced themselves as the committee in charge of the proceedings. Almost literally at the point of the gun they proposed to the gathering a prepared list of names to be elected to the Soviet. No one raised any vocal objection, but the atmosphere of an alien authority based on crude force was transparently clear.

Another impression which I carried away from these village trips was that of trying to force water to run uphill. In Ukraine, where many of the peasants had been relatively well-to-do before the Revolution, and where resistance to the Soviet regime in the country districts had been long and stubborn, there were so-called committees of *nezamozhniki*, or poor. To these committees the Soviet authorities gave certain vaguely defined rights of plundering and harassing their more prosperous neighbors, in return for their political support. These committees were no longer so formidable as they had been during the civil war, when they also existed in Russia proper and turned the villages into an inferno of hatred (which sometimes flared up in fierce massacres) by robbing the food stocks of the other villagers, keeping part for themselves and turning over the rest to the Soviet requisitioning detachments. But one found in them just the types that must have come to the top in America's carpetbag era—the ne'er-do-wells, the shiftless, the malicious, frustrated, and unfit.

Even in those years, when the Soviet Government was leaving the peasants more or less free, there was a tendency to persecute any individual who gave the most modest indication of improved wellbeing. It was inadvisable for a peasant, for instance, to put a tin roof on his house. This would mark him out as a *kulak*<sup>1</sup> to be

<sup>1</sup> The Russian word *kulak* means "fist," and before the war it was applied to the small class of village usurers, who were supposed to hold their neighbors in their fists. After the Revolution the Communists extended the word to apply to any peasant who rose above the general level of backwardness and poverty, even though the peasant might have improved his condition only through hard work and intelligence, without any question of usury. This distinction is important to bear in mind, in judging the scope of the subsequent measure which was euphemistically called "the liquidation of the kulaks as a class."

burdened with special taxes and other disabilities. His children, for instance, would not be admitted to high schools or universities. This official attitude was not calculated to help the village emerge from its traditional filth and poverty.

I have deliberately lumped together the observations which led me to give up my original attitude as a Soviet sympathizer. But it would be inaccurate to suppose that I saw only the dark sides of Soviet life. The psychological stage which succeeded partisanship was neutrality and detachment. We had Communist friends whose sincerity and devotion we respected, and who helped us to see the more constructive aspects of Soviet life: the educational work among women, the rabfacs, or special schools for workers, the crèches and clinics and sanatoria which were a part of the new program of social legislation.

By a special dispensation we were once permitted to sit in at the session, supposedly closed to outsiders, of the Communist *yacheika* (the word literally means "cell"), or local group, at a Moscow electrical power plant. I was struck by the inverted class snobbishness when the question of admission of new members was presented. The workers who made up the great majority of the group were willing to admit almost any worker, regardless of his qualifications, while they were extremely distrustful of any intellectual whose name was offered as a prospective member. But one also carried away the impression that there was more purpose and dignity in the lives of these worker Communists than there would have been before the Revolution.

We spent a number of evenings in the flat of Olga Chernisheva, whom I instinctively christened a daughter of the Revolution. We had met her at a Soviet Congress in Kharkov, and I took down her life story as she told it to us in several installments to the familiar Russian accompaniment of numerous glasses of tea. A village girl, she had been "sold" by her father, in semi-Oriental fashion, to a local swain who offered a barrel of samogon (moonshine whisky) as a part of the marriage settlement. With her husband she went to work in a textile factory in Petrograd. At this time she was very religious and went on pilgrimages to many of Russia's famous shrines and monasteries.

Like millions of other Russians, she became a revolutionary as a result of the World War. Her husband was killed at the front, her allowance as a soldier's widow was not enough for her and her

small daughter. An appeal to the Imperial Princess who was at the head of the organization for relief of war widows and orphans was unsuccessful, and Chernisheva went away bitter and empty-handed, crying: "If my child were a puppy or a kitten you would have done more for her." In this mood she was an easy convert for the underground Bolshevik agitators who were active in the factories.

Countess Panina, a pioneer Russian social worker and a prominent member of the Cadet (Constitutional Democratic) party, had sponsored in Petrograd a sort of community center known as the People's House where radicals, even during the war, were able to deliver lectures and give courses, and here Chernisheva began to absorb elementary socialist ideas.

There was a dramatic change of circumstances after the Bolshevik seizure of power. Panina, like all liberals, was left far behind by the rushing millstream of social upheaval. When she was brought to trial for refusing to turn over her post as Minister of Social Welfare to the Bolshevik claimant of the office, one of the judges was the obscure working girl, Chernisheva, who had begun to acquire some of her first coherent economic ideas in Panina's courses. The Revolution had not yet entered its sanguinary stage, and Panina, whom I met many years later in Prague, escaped with a nominal sentence.

Chernisheva became a pilgrim of a different kind during the civil war. Naturally an eloquent, passionate speaker, she went from one front to another and to newly occupied regions as a propagandist and organizer. Once she nearly lost her life when the Cossack cavalry of General Denikin broke through the Red lines and swept over a region where she was trying to build up the Soviet system. After the civil war she continued to lead the restless, incessantly busy life of the active Communist, working in the trade-union movement during the day, attending courses at night to improve her fragmentary education.

Thinking of Chernisheva as a "daughter of the Russian Revolution," I sometimes recalled with amusement a highly respectable meeting of Daughters of the American Revolution which I had once attended, as a reporter, in Philadelphia. The two most significant events at this gathering were a decision to examine more closely the inscriptions on some ancient tombstones and the rejection of a proposed resolution of sympathy for the new regime

(not yet Bolshevik) which had succeeded Tsarism in Russia. "Liberty," declared one descendant of revolution, with the air of one stating a strikingly original thought, "is not license." History is often a process of change and repetition. It would not be altogether surprising if a descendant of Chernisheva, a century from now, a rich and respectable member of the new Soviet upper class, were hot in denunciation of "subversive agitators" who might be imbued with something of her ancestor's spirit.

When, after three or four years of residence in Moscow, I sometimes tried to cast up a balance sheet of the Soviet regime it seemed to me that quantitative achievements were more or less offset by qualitative failures. More people certainly knew how to read and write than before the Revolution, although what was offered to them in contemporary literature and journalism was a good deal less worth reading. Social insurance measures were not altogether lacking in Tsarist Russia; but they had been greatly extended. Hours of labor had been shortened. There was more opportunity for members of the poorer classes to obtain education, to rise in the state service. Discriminations against non-Russian nationalities had been abolished. Women were given full legal equality with men.

Against this, there was a depressingly low quality about Soviet life, a lack of savor about its censored books and magazines and newspapers, as about its badly prepared food. There was the sinister Gay-Pay-Oo, even in those years killing and exiling far more people than the Tsarist political police which preceded it. There was the harrying of the intelligentsia.

Even then my emotional sympathies were with the suppressed classes of the new regime, rather than with the now triumphant underdogs of Tsarist times. But in my writings, partly because of the pressure of censorship, partly because of inability to tell of many cases of cruelty and injustice because of the certainty that this would bring down further reprisals on the victims, partly because, in fairness, I felt obliged to contradict some of the ignorant and extravagant hostile pictures of Soviet life which appeared abroad, I held the balance pretty even. It was in this mood that I wrote my first book, "Soviet Russia." Later, when my views of the Soviet regime had become sharply more negative because of changed conditions which I shall describe in later chapters, I sometimes regretted the publication of this work. Still it was a

pretty faithful reflection of my views of the Soviet Union during the period of the Nep, with perhaps a 10 per cent allowance for the restraining influence of censorship.

How far were my writings before I left Russia, my correspondence in the *Monitor*, my magazine articles, my first book affected by the censorship? The question is of more than personal interest, because everyone who speaks or writes about the Soviet Union with the intention of returning to the country is to a greater or lesser degree under this pressure.

It is not an easy question to answer, because the indirect forms of censorship were far more important than the blue-penciling of cables by the censor in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. There was no official censorship of mail correspondence. But much more important than direct censorship was the weapon of putting the recalcitrant correspondent on the blacklist of the Gay-Pay-Oo, of expelling him from the country or refusing him permission to re-enter. (The shyster lawyer mentality which is extremely typical of the Soviet bureaucracy attached great importance to this distinction. Whenever possible, the undesired journalist was not expelled. He was simply refused permission to re-enter the country.)

Certain facts about Russia, secret executions and arrests by the Gay-Pay-Oo, important unpublished details of party controversies could only be communicated if one chose to run a strong risk of expulsion. Between this forbidden area and the "safe" area of facts which could be verified from the Soviet press there was a twilight zone where one simply had to use one's discretion in sending mail correspondence. My personal experience was that this system of indirect pressure led to a certain bowdlerization of style, to a tendency to resort to ambiguous phrases in describing unpleasant facts. And the relatively small proportion of material which one was definitely forbidden to send was no gauge of the scope of the censorship. There was no reason to take to the censor a story which he was certain to reject. The only effect of this would be to intensify the Gay-Pay-Oo's surveillance over one's comings and goings and very probably to cause unpleasant consequences for any Russian who might be suspected of supplying the undesirable information.

In looking back at twelve years of journalistic experience in Moscow I am impressed by the number of important events which



either were never reported abroad or were described in such evasive fashion as to convey no real idea of what was happening. The killing of the graduates of a certain high school which I mentioned earlier in the chapter was never, to the best of my knowledge, mentioned in any foreign newspaper. The arrests of many of Russia's most distinguished historians and scientists in later years went unrecorded. Even the famine of 1932-1933 was so deliberately concealed from foreign journalistic observers that many Soviet apologists denied its authenticity.

With my lack of experience as a foreign correspondent, I entered on my work for the *Monitor* a little apprehensive that I might be tried and found wanting if a big emergency should arise. However, the *Monitor* proved a congenial newspaper for which to work, and I had no very difficult problems of adjustment. Moscow was not a particularly lively or exciting journalistic assignment, despite the absorbing interest of the Revolution and the new social order which was growing out of it. The Soviet capital was outside the main currents of European capitals. It was never selected as the site of an important international conference, unless one could place the increasingly infrequent sessions of the Communist International in this category. And the mere fact of dictatorship eliminated automatically certain kinds of domestic news. No one thought, for instance, of staying up all night to learn the results of a Soviet election.

Perhaps the most impressive event which we witnessed in our first years in Russia was the mourning after the death of Lenin in January, 1924. There was organization in the massive funeral demonstrations; but there was also genuine grief, especially among the poorer classes. Sonya spoke to a woman with the familiar Russian shawl over her head who was weeping bitterly in cold so intense that her tears almost froze before she could wipe them away.

"He was a father to us all," she said, unconsciously transferring to Lenin the traditional conception of the Tsar as the "little father"; "he thought of the poorest of us, of cooks like myself." For days, in the bitterest cold which I remember having experienced in Moscow, enormous throngs waited patiently in line outside the Hall of the Trade Union (a building profusely decorated with large chandeliers which had formerly been the Hall of the Nobles) for the chance to view for a moment the body

lying in state with its guard of erect immobile Red Army soldiers, replaced at times by high party members. It was a moment of authentic drama, this passing of the greatest practical revolutionary of all time, who, unlike Robespierre and Danton, his predecessors of the French Revolution, had been able to survive and to master the storm which he set in motion. There was something symbolically appropriate, vast, elemental, Asiatic about the atmosphere of those days of mourning: the immense marching throngs with red banners draped in black, the endless playing of the revolutionary funeral march, the last ceremony in the historic Red Square. Here Lenin's embalmed body was to be preserved in a mausoleum as a concession to the pilgrimage instincts of Russians who no longer worshiped the bones of saints in old monasteries.

Competitive American journalism added two or three lighter touches to the day of Lenin's death. The news was announced early in the morning, but the censor refused to allow any telegrams to be sent until two in the afternoon. One enterprising journalist, a Russian-American, had anticipated such a possibility and had arranged with his office in London that a message "Send me fifty pounds" would be a code cipher indicating that Lenin had died. The message was sent by an unsuspecting telegraph operator, and the correspondent's agency would have been ahead of the world by several hours in reporting Lenin's death—if the man in the London office had not forgotten the significance of the words and put the message aside as an inconvenient request for more money. The news of Lenin's death, arriving later in the day, showed him too late what he had missed. Another American newspaperman, arriving at the telegraph office first, tried to insure priority for his message by dictating other unimportant dispatches so as to keep the wires occupied. And two others, representing rival branches of the same organization, almost came to blows in the telegraph office as to which one was entitled to send off the great story of the day.

Shortly before Lenin's death I had the interesting experience of interviewing Georgi Chicherin, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs. One of the early glorifiers of the Bolshevik Revolution in America had described the Soviet Cabinet as the most cultured in the history of the world. This characterization would be ludicrously inapplicable to the Soviet Cabinets of the last decade or more; Stalin has a marked preference for men of limited edu-

cation and mediocre intelligence. But the Soviet Cabinets of the first years of the Revolution did include several men of conspicuous erudition and brilliance; and Chicherin was one of the most distinguished of these.

He was one of the very few aristocrats in the Bolshevik ranks, and his family had possessed brains as well as pedigree and given to the Empire several well known administrators and diplomats. Chicherin himself was an extraordinary linguist, a brilliant amateur in music, and a notable satirist. I think he was only once beaten in the battle of wit in the years when the Soviet Republic was ostracized and his notes were essays in propaganda rather than in diplomacy. This was when Sir Arthur (later Lord) Balfour responded to one of Chicherin's allusions to the Soviet Government as the champion of the poor and oppressed with the languidly skeptical observation that, while Bolshevism was an excellent means of making rich men poor, it had shown no capacity to solve the more important social problem of how to make poor men rich.

Chicherin, whose health was finally completely undermined by a combination of lack of exercise, overwork, and a weakness which is frequently associated with the name of Oscar Wilde, was a man of very unusual habits. He worked at night, and midnight was his favorite hour for receiving foreign diplomats. My own interview was set for eleven P.M.; it was largely concerned with the prospects and conditions of American diplomatic recognition. What I chiefly remember of it was the Foreign Minister's remarkable range of allusions and analogies and the meticulous way in which he corrected one or two words in the copy of the interview which I submitted to him. There was no question of misrepresentation; but Chicherin was as keen and sensitive as the most exacting college professor to precise values of words in all the many languages which he spoke fluently.

Mikhail Kalinin, the peasant President of the Soviet Republic, whom I interviewed in his unpretentious office, the anteroom of which was crowded with petitioners from the villages, was a much simpler and less interesting figure. He was a shrewd muzhik, with no influence on affairs of state, but with a certain decorative value for the regime because everything about him, his blue eyes, straw-colored beard, wrinkled face, clumsy manners, proclaimed his peasant origin. That he possessed the faculty, very valuable under a dictatorship, of knowing on which side his bread was but-

tered is evident from the fact that he retained his office undisturbed while so many old Bolsheviks of political prominence and intellectual distinction were being killed off and degraded.

The most attractive personality among the higher Soviet officials whom I met in Russia was Aleksei Rykov, elected Premier after Lenin's death, shot after the third big trial of old Bolsheviks in 1938. I accompanied him on a trip of inspection to the lower Volga provinces after the drought of 1924, and he made the impression, which I seldom received from individuals in high places in Russia, of really caring about the distress which he had come to relieve. It was his opposition to the use of terror, famine, and concentration camps as aids to the establishment of collective farming that led to his deposition and finally to his death. Had Rykov been a stronger man, had he been willing and able to establish connection with some of the Red Army leaders who were also disgusted with the brutal excesses of forced collectivization he might have overthrown Stalin in 1929 or 1930, before the new agrarian servitude had been clamped down. In this event an immense amount of suffering would have been spared, and the course of Soviet history would have been greatly changed.

An earnest and devoted man—as humane, perhaps, as a high official in a revolutionary government could be—Rykov had a Russian weakness for strong drink. When vodka of 40 per cent alcoholic content was again offered for legal sale after some unsuccessful experiments with complete and partial prohibition, the censor was kept busy preventing correspondents from cabling the frivolous news item that the new beverage was popularly known as “rykovka.”

One of my few beats (the competitive element was at a minimum in the interpretative and descriptive type of correspondence which the *Monitor* encouraged) was a result of Rykov's convivial habits. I obtained an interview with him at the time when the negotiations for the grant of a manganese concession to the American industrialist Averill Harriman were approaching their conclusion. The status of the discussions was veiled in mystery. Neither the Harriman representatives nor the Soviet Concessions Committee would talk.

My interview was in the early evening in the Premier's office in the Kremlin, and I found him not intoxicated but in a pleasantly exhilarated state of mind where he was very willing to talk about

anything under the sun, including the concession. Despite the hints and frowns of an ill natured and suspicious secretary, Rykov told me definitely that the concession had been signed, outlined its terms and was going to show me the actual contract when the strong-willed secretary interposed a decisive veto. So I was able to send out the first account of the concession which, like many similar agreements, ended in disagreement and premature cancellation.

After I left Russia I sometimes received letters inquiring as to "what the Jews were doing under the Soviet regime," implying that the Jews were acting as a solid compact body, and that the whole Revolution was a Jewish conspiracy. There is not the slightest historical warrant for such an assumption. Since the Jews were singled out for persecution and discrimination under the old regime (although Tsarist measures were mild, compared with those of the Nazis) the great majority of them naturally welcomed its downfall, although certainly no Jew was responsible for Russia's decision to enter the World War. This was the fundamental cause of the collapse of the Imperial regime, which might otherwise be ruling Russia today.

But the fate of the Jews under bolshevism has been as varied as that of any other race. Considerable numbers of Jews have made careers in the Soviet bureaucracy. Of perhaps a dozen officials whom I knew in the Press Department of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs I recall only one who was not a Jew. Indeed the predominance of Jews in this Commissariat at the time of my stay in Russia was almost ludicrous; the Russians were mainly represented by the grizzled doorkeepers and the unkempt old women who carried around tea. One also found many Jews in the Gay-Pay-Oo, in the Communist International and in departments concerned with trade and finance. On the other hand the entire well-to-do Jewish class of prewar days was destroyed as ruthlessly as the corresponding Russian class. Many Jews were prominent members of non-Bolshevik revolutionary parties, such as the Mensheviki and the Socialist Revolutionaries; these are almost all in prison or in exile. Many of the old Bolsheviki whom Stalin has shot or outlawed (including Trotzky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, and Sokolnikov) are of Jewish origin. No theory that the Jews as a racial bloc worked for the triumph of bolshevism will stand serious historical analysis. To the Jews as to the Russians, the Revolution was a curious lottery,

bringing advancement and high office to some, ruin and destruction to others.

Incidentally the Soviet Union is the only country where I have had to struggle against an occasional anti-Semitic impulse. Sonya and I sometimes privately referred to the Jews as "the dominant race," and many of the Jewish Soviet officials were decidedly unprepossessing types, bumptious, arrogant, shifty, suspicious, and rather obsessed with a well founded inferiority complex. Any kind of class or race or color prejudice is abhorrent to me, and when, against my will, I would think of some objectionable Soviet bureaucrat as a Jew and not simply as an unpleasant individual I would always get the best of the momentary prejudice by reflecting that it was the revolutionary process itself that brought to the top so many spiteful and frustrated characters. No doubt, if there had not been a Jew in Russia, the Russians themselves or some other racial minority would have supplied just as many ill bred, puffed-up, psychologically and sometimes physically deformed functionaries.

In spite of my waning enthusiasm for Communism I find these first years in Moscow quite pleasant in retrospect. There was plenty of work to be done that seemed more purposeful and interesting than the book reviews and free-lance articles which I had been writing in New York. Sonya and I spent many hours every week in the library of the Communist Academy, delving into the historical records of the Revolution, old newspapers that were fast falling to pieces because of the bad printing and paper of the years of blockade and civil war, pamphlets, historical magazines, books of personal reminiscences.

For I had always wanted to write a history of the Bolshevik Revolution, including the subsequent period of civil war. I first learned to read Russian with the aid of a history of the civil war, written in a fairly simple vocabulary, and a bulky dictionary. It somehow suggested the boyhood days in Camden with von Raumer and a German dictionary. This preparatory work could have gone on indefinitely; it actually lasted for ten years and produced an accumulation of several dozen large books of notes and many hundreds of books and pamphlets before I set about the actual writing of the history.

Our way of living in Moscow was simple and might have seemed impossible to Americans with a highly developed sense of comfort and to Europeans with an inclination for social form; but we

enjoyed it thoroughly. For many years we occupied a single room in a little house which had been rented by the American and British Friends, who were still carrying on some medical relief work in Samara Province, where they had begun by aiding war prisoners and later took charge of famine relief in one county. After our daughter was born we obtained a larger share of the house, and after the Friends left Russia (the Soviet authorities were always anxious to speed the departure of foreign relief organizations after getting as much out of them as possible in the way of supplies) we enjoyed the extreme luxury, measured by Soviet standards, of an entire floor to ourselves, with three rooms, a dining room and kitchen. The house was located on a little street called Borisoglebsky in honor of two Russian saints, Boris and Gleb. It was a quiet little street between the bustling Arbat and the more residential Vorovsky, renamed in honor of a murdered Soviet diplomat, where several foreign embassies and legations were located.

For me there was an almost indescribable charm about Moscow before it went in for Soviet town planning on a big scale. There was a semi-Oriental character about the city. One never tired of the barbaric blend of colors in the Church of St. Basil, and the magnificent view of the Kremlin, with its crenellated battlements, the roofs of its palaces, the domes of its churches, also suggested the East rather than the West. The slow tempo of life which helps to make some people fall in love with Peking was also characteristic of Moscow.

Looking out into the courtyard which faced our house, one could see a colorful procession of types that might have stepped out of the pages of Gogol or Ostrovsky or Chekhov: a weather-beaten peasant woman, crying, "Moloko" (Milk), with a sound something like the cawing of a crow; a fish vender with his resonant shout: "Riba, riba, riba, khoroshaya svezhaya riba" (Fish, fish, fish, good fresh fish); an itinerant cobbler who, with the histrionic eloquence that is every Russian's national gift, proclaimed his ability to repair everything, from umbrellas to watches; a voluble speculator in discarded bottles.

These were figures from the Russian past. The Soviet present made its appearance when the house committee, on a warm summer evening, had to face the embattled lodgers of the large apartment house which was across the courtyard. The house committee was

the natural result of a system under which all large houses had been confiscated and made the property of the state, the municipality, or some special institution. Elected by the tenants, but with the usual pressure to insure Communist control, the house committee became a sort of collective landlord, levying rents, attending (theoretically at least) to repairs, and allotting housing space. With the best will in the world its task was far from easy, for every Muscovite house was crowded almost to the suffocation point. It was no unusual thing for a divorced couple (and divorces were almost as numerous as marriages in Moscow at that time) to be obliged to continue to share the common room, partitioning it with some kind of curtain or screen. So the sessions when the house committee was obliged to give an account of itself were apt to be lively and acrimonious.

There was no question of "keeping up with the Joneses," no "society," for which we were profoundly grateful. It was only toward the end of our stay in Moscow that I bought evening clothes. Our entertainments were of the kind that I liked: a few friends around the samovar in the evening, with cakes or caviar sandwiches. Both space limitations and personal preferences caused us to abstain from large teas and cocktail parties.

Food was plentiful in those years, and the physical inconveniences of Moscow housekeeping were amusing rather than galling. We were quite surprised to find that we had acquired a sort of martyr status when we told acquaintances abroad that we used a piece of raw potato as a substitute for the bathtub plug which could not be found anywhere in Moscow. (This device, incidentally, was suggested to us by Russian friends who had lived through the rigors of war communism.)

Our cook, an eccentric peasant woman, made up, in rather typically Russian fashion, for her practical defects by ventures into homespun philosophy—"foolosophy," Sonya called it in her more annoyed moments. Whenever she broke a plate (which was not seldom) she would remark that a plate was like a human being; it had its appointed term of life. When we urged her to wage vigorous war on the cockroaches which occasionally appeared in the kitchen, she refused point-blank.

"Those cockroaches are a sign of God's blessing on this house," she would say quite solemnly. "They are only here because there is plenty of food. If we destroy them a curse will fall on us."



For recreation there was the Opera, with the somber and profound music-dramas of Moussorgsky and the gorgeous fairy-tale fantasies of Rimsky-Korsakov. In the theater there was a wide range of choice, from the classical naturalism of the Art Theater to the rather artificial aestheticism of Tairov and the boisterous shows of Meierhold, Communist in political tendency and highly experimental in stagecraft. The merit of the plays was very uneven; the quality of the acting, almost uniformly high; for, as we soon realized, almost every Russian, from the Communist asking contributions to aid strikers or revolutionaries from Panama to Siam to the beggar imploring alms outside the Moscow Cathedral, is a superb natural actor.

So, if the first years in Moscow were years of disenchantment, of gradual abandonment of the long-distance admiration which I had felt for the Soviet regime in New York, they were by no means years of unhappiness or frustration. America, which I did not revisit for ten years after I had left it, receded more and more into the distance. Moscow, with its little circle of Russian and foreign friends (one could still keep up social relations with Russians at that time, although they would be periodically scared away when the Gay-Pay-Oo became too active) seemed more and more a home.

## CHAPTER SIX: *American and Chinese Interludes*

*There were two interludes* in my long Russian cycle. One was the constant influence of America through book, magazines, newspapers, personal contacts. The other was a first view of China, obtained as a result of a temporary transfer to Shanghai in 1927.

I am afraid that my attention was largely focused on the funny sides of America during these years of voluntary emigration. Growing disbelief in Communism in theory and in practice did not convert me into an uncritical admirer of everything American; and I remained an impenitent skeptic and scoffer on what Communists might have called the American "cultural front" long after I had more or less consciously accepted political democracy and economic individualism as the best system in an imperfect world, in view of my growing aversion to collectivist dictatorship.

During the gilded twenties, when Americans had so few serious worries, there was much uproarious slapstick comedy in the United States, which I applauded heartily from my distant gallery seat in Moscow. There was the incredible trial of the earnest young high-school teacher, Scopes, accused of corrupting the youth of Dayton, Tennessee, by communicating to them the legally forbidden ideas of Charles Darwin on evolution. The Soviet atheist organization, which every good Communist was supposed to support, the Union of the Godless, was one of about a hundred groups that offered to pay Scopes's fine of one hundred dollars after he had been convicted. The entire trial was an expansive three-ring circus with public attention focused on the champions of orthodoxy and free thought, William Jennings Bryan and Charles Darrow.

How we roared in the little Quaker flat over a literal transcript of the trial proceedings which reached us in Moscow, especially

over Bryan's firm and repeated "No" when Darrow cross-examined him as to his knowledge of anthropology, geology, palaeontology, and other polysyllabic subjects on which Darrow had just refreshed his own memory. Bryan's retorts about the Rock of Ages being more important than the ages of rocks, about leaving the agnostics to hunt for Cain's wife, and about his belief in a "God who can make a man and make a whale and make both do what he wants" also left a permanent impression. Against a Moscow background they suggested the cocksure young Communist, strong in his faith, shouting down the doubting intellectual.

A book, impregnated with the spirit of the time, which impressed me as extremely amusing, although it was written and received with the utmost seriousness, was Bruce Barton's "The Man Nobody Knows," with its modest subtitle "A Discovery of the Real Jesus." I have not at hand a copy of Mr. Barton's venture into the field of Renan, but some of its passages and interpretations were unforgettable: "A kill-joy! [Jesus] was the most popular dinner guest in Jerusalem!"

The miracles were interpreted as up-to-the-minute publicity stunts, and there was unstinted praise for Jesus's executive ability, which, in a world already oversold with his product, religion, could take twelve men "from the bottom ranks of society" and forge them into a sales organization that broke down all resistance. Then there were some sprightly speculations as to how the editor of the *Capernaum News* would have reported the healing of the palsied man.

"The Man Nobody Knows" was significant as well as amusing. It was a striking object lesson in the eternal tendency of every age to make over its gods in its own image. Here was a deliberate and, judging from the wide circulation of the book, a successful effort to "sell" Jesus as a pioneer Rotarian to the contemporary generation of back-slapping, slogan-shouting salesmen, of whom Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* is such an admirable example.

What impressed me as I viewed America from the detached observation point of Moscow was its cult of the freak, the eccentric, the incongruous. Theodore Rothstein, a cultivated old revolutionary, whom I found the most congenial of the several heads of the Soviet Press Department whom I knew in Russia, once remarked to me:

"In Europe illiterate people are inarticulate. But in America they are talking all the time."

Communist and fascist dictatorships have greatly extended the scope of the vociferous illiterate in Europe—a point which, for considerations of tact, I did not labor with Comrade Rothstein. But it is true that America, new, young, and raw, without the restraining influences of an aristocracy, of an established church, of a recognized center of national culture such as the French Academy, with a distinct preponderance of energy over reflective intelligence in the national character, brings to the fore more than the normal proportion of prophets whose assurance is out of all relation to their knowledge and experience.

One found an abundance of incongruous episodes in American life, past and present, in the *American Mercury*, which, under the lusty editorship of H. L. Mencken, became one of my favorite magazines. Despite much documentary evidence to the contrary, I have always considered Mencken a good, even a typical, American. No alien could belabor "homo Americanus" with so much zestful energy, just as no one without an authentic streak of Babbitt and Main Street in his make-up could have created Sinclair Lewis's topical masterpieces of middle-class American life.

Mencken was, I think, in the line of Dr. Samuel Johnson and Bernard Shaw. His exaggerations were gross, his historical facts were often askew and his generalizations challenged exception. On the historical side I could not accept his sprightly statement that the Tsars fell because of liberalism, because they no longer ruled Russia like "a house of correction, a Southern Baptist 'university' or the D.A.R."; but the association of likenesses was delicious. And I remember with a chuckle one of Mencken's numerous diatribes against the average American containing the phrase: "Greek to him is a jargon for bootblacks and Wagner is a retired baseball player."

The *Mercury* performed a useful social function by digging up and presenting, no doubt with a certain amount of fancy trimming, the careers of some of America's more fantastic rascals, cranks, and eccentrics. It was one-sided, of course, but its one-sidedness was justified in an era when Babbitt was enthroned.

An individual who gave me more amusement than he ever suspected, and who was, I think, somewhat typical of America during the merry twenties, was the Right Reverend William Montgomery

Brown, retired Episcopal Bishop of Arkansas. One might have imagined that the retired Bishop of a predominantly conservative Church, and from a state which, to put it mildly, has never been distinguished for heretical thought, would have been a pillar of orthodoxy in politics and theology.

But the Venerable Brown, after his retirement, found time to read. For the first time in his life he read Darwin. He followed this up with a good stiff course in Marx. And the effects were explosive. To the horror of his fellow clerics and the delight of the east side and Greenwich Village he was transformed almost overnight into a rampant communist and infidel. He burst out with a book, probably published at his own expense, which was largely an elaboration of a slogan which he printed on the title page: "Banish gods from skies and capitalists from earth." He published a picture of himself in full ecclesiastical regalia opposite the famous citation from Karl Marx: "Religion is the opium of the people."

He fairly goaded his colleagues of the House of Bishops into putting him on trial for heresy and then, rather illogically, fought with every available resource to retain his episcopal title. He went to New York and suggested to Bishop Manning that "in the interests of religious harmony" it would be very nice if he could be invited to preach in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The Bishop of New York handled the situation with more solemnity than humor. He published a thundering denunciation of Brown and all his works, which gave the clerical infidel from Arkansas just the publicity which he probably wanted.

While I do not think I am lacking in the capacity for reverence, enthusiasm, and admiration when these emotions are called for, I must confess to possessing what prim people would probably consider a perverted and misplaced weakness for the bizarre, the incongruous. Something in my sense of the humorous responds very strongly to the infidel ex-Bishop, whom I instinctively christened "episcopus in partibus infidelium," and to a certain serious-minded millionaire lady who went Red and deluged irate conservatives with what she called "letters of protest," and to the artless theology of the incomparable Father Divine.

Sonorous names for prosaic places also have their effect on me. I have always cherished a suppressed desire to go up to an unsuspecting citizen of Troy, New York, and ask him whether Hector is fighting Achilles on the city wall, to buttonhole a hillbilly in

Rome, Georgia, and inquire whether Cicero is speaking in the Forum and to quote from Sophocles and Euripides in the streets of Athens, Ohio.

My closest contact with America was obtained by working for an enterprising news agency which I shall call the Amalgamated News during 1925 and 1926. This arrangement was with the consent of the *Monitor*; it added to my bank account, to my knowledge of practical journalism, and to my fund of after-dinner anecdotes.

I cannot say, however, that I enjoyed this plunge into high-powered streamlined news gathering. The agency and I were probably equally satisfied when the arrangement came to an end with the sending of a full-time correspondent of the agency to Moscow. Thinking out the little turns of phrase that make an event look more exciting and significant than it really is, and learning the tricks by which one dispatches a news message to its destination ten or fifteen minutes ahead of one's sweating and baffled competitor did not come easily to me; and I have never done anything well (from solving geometrical theorems to swimming) that has not come easily to me. On some occasions, when I was bombarded with impatient cables of inquiry, I felt as if my old nightmare of being sent out to report a fire had actually come to pass. I was between the hammer of rapid-fire American journalism and the anvil of semi-Asiatic Soviet bureaucracy.

I found compensation for all these discomforts in the perusal of the weekly "Log" of the agency, with its chronicles of victories and defeats in the chase after news in five continents and its admirable terse epigrammatic definitions of news values, of which the following was typical:

"How many corpses? That tells whether it's a story."

The Logs offered an unrivaled course in journalism without benefit of any soothing platitudes. News was merchandise in an intensely competitive world, to be served up hot on the griddle and highly spiced to suit the tastes of the purchasers. One gained an intimate view of the predilections of the editors of the wide cross-section of newspapers, large, medium, and small, which the agency served, and hence of the desires and interests of the mass newspaper-reader.

His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, was apparently the most interesting personage in the world to millions of freeborn

Americans; there was a constant stream of inquiries about the least detail of the Prince's activities, including such nudging insinuations as: "What's he doing with himself—anything spectacular in the night-club line or following any pretty actresses?" The culminating point was reached when the following frantic appeal went out to all the agency's hirelings: "Worn a subject as it is, even the possible engagement of the Prince of Wales still is page one news, and any stretch of the imagination that would produce an engagement story would be welcomed."

That nothing is more disastrous in journalism than anticlimax was evident from the following disgusted comment on the reporting of an accident which turned out to be less sanguinary than was at first reported: "The munitions explosion in Prague caused plenty of trouble owing to Blank's message putting the dead at ninety-two and immediate subsequent message revising the figure to three. I don't know what the editors said when they got the correction, but they probably said plenty."

One had a vision of editors in Oshkosh, Xenia, and Kalamazoo kicking over chairs, throwing telephones on the floor, and going through other gestures of violent displeasure on learning that they had only three Czech corpses instead of ninety-two to serve up to their readers.

The occasional penalties of the constant effort to be first with the news were crisply reflected in another communiqué: "Had bad luck in killing off Cardinal Mercier too early, although we did some quick retrieving here."

The Prince of Wales was the preferred hero of the agency cables, but lesser royalty had its claims. The publicity organ of the Amalgamated News grandly boasted that "when Prince Carol of Rumania renounced his throne for love it was through the Amalgamated News that he related his personal story in an interview at Milan." The candid Log, on the other hand, admitted a major defeat in connection with Carol's abdication: "Amalgamated News took the beating of the season on Prince Carol's renunciation of the Rumanian throne. It was there, complete and masterful. We had not a line. The fault, of course, lies in the fact that we are not now and never have been properly protected in Bucharest."

When the deposed Shah of Persia took up residence in Paris it was suggested that "any of his mistresses would be good for a bit of publicity if they'd talk *re* him as the ideal lover, or the happy

exiled monarch, glad to be free from the chains of office, or some such chatter." This and many other requests were in line with the definition of sex as "a breakfast, dinner, and supper subject in America."

Working for the Amalgamated News, one had an excellent opportunity to study the reading tastes of the American public. One of the best numbers of the Log suggested as the six most desirable subjects for mail articles: "women, liquor, wealth, religion, science, and immorality." What is desired under the head of science is not an exposition of the theory of relativity by Professor Einstein, but rather a statement by some quack that he has discovered a cure for cancer, established an air route between the earth and the moon, or transformed the sun's rays into a source of motor energy.

One received a still more direct stimulus in noting the stories which were singled out for special praise in the Log. Among these were: Sargent from the Spirit World Demands Jazz; Younger Set in Berlin Demands Petting Parties in Taxis; Dancing Masters in Paris Vote Down the Charleston. And there was a plea to the Buenos Aires bureau of the agency: "Give us more stories like girl suiciding because her lover called her a hippopotamus."

Just for the fun of it, I tried to win the plaudits of the Log myself. I ransacked the Soviet press for tales of witches and wizards in remote parts of the country, for weird peasant crimes, and for the sex customs of primitive tribes. My greatest success, I think, was with a story taken from Moscow's evening newspaper about a new serum, distilled from the internal secretions of a bull and calculated to cure all human ailments. I really sent this as a test of how much the Amalgamated News would swallow and was both surprised and amused on reading in the Log: "Moscow bull story much appreciated; hit page one in several newspapers."

So work for the Amalgamated News had its amusing sides. But in the main I found it both strenuous and boring and was glad when I could view it only in retrospect. I retained a mild interest in the agency and discovered a common subject of conversation with a European diplomat in Tokyo who took a grim delight in exposing every case of exaggeration in the American press in general and the Amalgamated News in particular; and I felt a reminiscent, if not a nostalgic, glow when I read an especially skittish piece about the short-lived effort to put on an exhibition



of "Miss Nude" at the New York World's Fair, issued by the agency, and when, on catching a glimpse of some of its Logs in Tokyo, I read the old familiar juvenile whoops of delight and groans of dejection.

My own experience as a minor cog in the Amalgamated News machine sharpened my conception of America as a huge market where everyone was trying to outsell everyone else. News, as purveyed by the agencies which supplied the greatest number of newspapers, was not reported simply, naturally, realistically. It had to be dressed up and garnished to an accompaniment of stereotyped Hollywood melodrama and banal clichés. In the same way all too many authors, professors, and scientists were obliged or tempted to "sell" their work, in much the same fashion as the Babbitts were selling Ford cars, iceless refrigerators, and real estate, just as a certain type of successful minister or Y.M.C.A. secretary would probably not have objected to the suggestion that he was engaged in "selling" Christ.

I felt that I should be quite lost and out of place in this vast and noisy fair. It was better to remain the detached observer in Moscow, even if the original enthusiasm of the Communist believer had passed away.

There was a break in my Moscow experience when I was transferred to China in 1927. The last months of 1926 and the first months of 1927 were the flood tide in the Chinese Nationalist revolution. The Nationalist armies, advised by Soviet officers and provided with still more useful Soviet experts in political propaganda, had swept up from Canton to the valley of the Yangtze, capturing first Hankow, then Shanghai, finally Nanking.

There was a strong effervescence of antiforeign, especially anti-British feeling. The British were practically mobbed out of administrative control of their concessions in Hankow and Kiu-kiang. The foreign population at Shanghai was protected by a large, predominantly British international expeditionary force. But at Nanking there was a serious antiforeign outbreak. Chinese troops, getting out of hand, began to kill, rape, and pillage in the foreign residential quarters. A general massacre was averted only when British and American warships laid down a barrage around the building where most of the foreigners had taken refuge. (The Soviet press, with typical propagandist mendacity, represented this as an unprovoked slaughter of helpless Chinese by

bloodthirsty foreign imperialists.) A new Boxer movement seemed within the range of possibility.

By the time I arrived in Shanghai the high point of tension between Chinese and foreigners had passed. The vital element of unity had gone out of the Chinese revolutionary movement. The excesses against foreigners were part of a general social revolutionary upheaval which had become distasteful to the Chinese well-to-do classes. Chiang Kai-shek, just emerging into prominence as the outstanding nationalist military leader, resented the tutelage of the Soviet officers and political advisers. With the hearty approval of the Chinese bankers, manufacturers, and more conservative intellectuals, he smashed the Communist-controlled new-fledged labor organizations in Shanghai and set up a new government at Nanking. The majority of the executive committee of the Kuomintang (People's Nationalist party), still attached to the Russian connection and to a radical, if somewhat nebulous, social program, supported a rival government at Hankow, the metropolis of the middle Yangtze.

Meanwhile the armies of Chang Tso-lin, an opium-smoking ex-bandit who was, however, a shrewd and not incapable administrator, still held the provinces of north China. Another factor in the complicated situation was the so-called Christian General, Feng Yu-hsiang, in northwestern China. Feng had been successively an old-fashioned war lord, a Christian, to the delight of the missionaries, and a Communist, to the delight of equally credulous believers in Moscow, remaining all the time what he was by nature, a cunning Chinese peasant. He was just about to make a new about-face, from Communism to Nationalism, after having extracted as much help from Russia as possible in the way of arms as a tribute to his professed sympathy with the Red cause.

This, in brief outline, was the situation as I found it when I arrived in Shanghai in the muggy heat of the early Yangtze valley summer. It was with some doubts that I entered on this new assignment. (I went to China alone because I left Moscow only a few weeks before the birth of our daughter.) In Russia I had accumulated a fair amount of background and experience. China was entirely new to me. However, I felt a mild access of self-confidence when I encountered a British journalist, an acquaintance from Moscow, in the lobby of a Shanghai hotel. He was so

befuddled by Chinese names that he did not know which armies were moving north, and which were moving south. I at least knew this, and the little incident had a bolstering effect on my morale.

J. B. Powell, the sturdy and outspoken editor of the *China Weekly Review*, whose open-handed hospitality must have placed hundreds of foreign visitors to Shanghai in his debt, helped me to meet a number of prominent Chinese Nationalists, including Dr. C. T. Wang, former Ambassador to the United States, and the late C. C. Wu, who was then acting as Foreign Minister in Chiang Kai-shek's government.

"J. B.," as almost everyone called him, was very much in disfavor with the leaders of Shanghai society at the time because of his sympathy with the Chinese Nationalist cause. A considerable part of the foreign community of Shanghai was in an almost hysterical state, fearful that all its property and privileges would be swept away and incapable of making any distinction between reasonable Chinese grievances, Soviet propaganda, and revolutionary excesses. Powell, however, was not a man to shrink from a struggle and stood by his guns vigorously in his weekly magazine. He was one of the foreigners—not very numerous, unfortunately, in Shanghai—who were free from the racial superiority complex which contributed a good deal of unnecessary embitterment to Sino-foreign relations. As a good unconscious exhibit in racial snobbery I recall a British lawyer with whom I was discussing the question of judicial institutions in China.

"Oh, there are such things as Chinese courts," he said in accents of indescribable condescension, "and I dare say a certain kind of justice is done in them."

A little later he mentioned an acquaintance as knowing some "reputable" Chinese, the implication being that 99 per cent of the Chinese were definitely and hopelessly disreputable.

I set out for my most interesting experience in China when I left Shanghai and sailed six hundred miles up the mighty Yangtze River to Hankow, where the left-wing Nationalist government had its capital. Two discordant fellow travelers were the veteran British skipper of the boat, whose every reference to Chinese was voiced in terms of sulphurous profanity, and a former American I.W.W., whose bristling porcupine temperament and love for argument might have qualified him as the writer of a book on how to lose friends and alienate people.

These two were simply made for a quarrel, and the hot trip up the sluggish Yangtze was enlivened by their acid bickerings. The skipper felt that he had scored one point when he remarked to the syndicalist, "You're as bad as a bloody missionary"—missionaries apparently being the only individuals in the captain's experience who had ever spoken a good word for the Chinese. The argument was interrupted at one point when Chinese soldiers on the bank fired an aimless volley of shots at the vessel. The foreigners in the armor-plated first-class cabins were unscathed, but three Chinese in the steerage were killed.

"If they'd only kill Chinese *and Americans*, I wouldn't care how much they fired on the bloody ship," snarled the captain, with a venomous glare at the I.W.W.

"That's exactly the way I feel about the British, captain," was the prompt retort, delivered with a pugnacious forward thrust of the jaw. Before we arrived in Hankow the skipper was audibly muttering about his intention to put the subversive American in irons; but, doubtful of his own legal powers in this connection, he contented himself with scowling at his unwelcome passenger as the latter left the boat.

In Hankow I found many of the leading figures of the Chinese revolution. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was the paradoxical Eugene Chen. After a long career as a successful barrister in the West Indies, Chen had returned to China, where he became an active Nationalist publicist. Unable to speak or read Chinese, he denounced British imperialism in English that was both blistering and impeccable. Like Chicherin, he had an excellent feeling for the precise use of English words, and his vocabulary of invective was not only rich but well selected.

Sometimes, in reading or listening to Chen's denunciations, I remembered the lawyer in Shanghai and the tone of infinite condescension in which he spoke of "a certain kind of justice" that might be found in Chinese courts. I wondered whether a double sense of race and color discrimination (Chen's first wife was of partly Negro origin) had sharpened his sense of his country's grievances.

An intellectual, more at home in criticism than in positive action, Chen gave one convincing proof of personal courage. He had been arrested in Peking by the Manchurian war lord, Chang Tso-lin. Chang's familiar method with "agitators" was to have them

strangled or beheaded. Chen, ironically enough, was technically a British subject and there was much speculation as to whether he would plead, on his own behalf, the right of extraterritoriality<sup>1</sup> which he had been denouncing as an outrageous violation of Chinese sovereignty. He declined to do this, and Chang Tso-lin, revealing more sportsmanship than one would expect to find in an Oriental despot, was so favorably impressed that he let him go.

Another attitude toward this ethical question of taking advantage of foreign privileges was that of Dr. C. T. Wang. Although he was a well known Nationalist he was on bad terms, at one time, with the dominant clique in the Kuomintang. He preferred to live in the French Concession of Shanghai, where he was not exposed to the danger of being haled before a summary court-martial. When it was suggested that he was acting inconsistently in making use of the foreign concession when he had so often attacked the special privileges of foreigners, he replied that he could see no inconsistency at all. The foreign concessions, he believed, were an injustice to China. He had worked and would continue to work for their abolition, regardless of the personal consequences to himself. But he saw no reason why he should not continue to take advantage of them as a personal convenience so long as they existed. The Chinese are a rationalistic rather than a romantic people, and Dr. Wang's attitude was more characteristic, I think, than that of Eugene Chen or of Wu Pei-fu, the old general who also consistently refused to seek the shelter of foreign territory in moments of defeat.

I met Madame Sun Yat-sen, the young widow of the founder of the Chinese Nationalist movement, in the spacious room of a house which looked out over the broad Yangtze River. I made the rather banal remark that she enjoyed a beautiful view. Her reply was quick and to the point:

"A beautiful view, indeed, with all your warships out there."

A number of foreign small cruisers, gunboats, and destroyers were stationed at Hankow—a constant irritating reminder to the Chinese Nationalists of their own naval impotence and of the reprisals which might follow if the revolution were pushed too far.

Madame Sun Yat-sen's personality was the product of a curi-

<sup>1</sup> Extraterritoriality is the right of a foreigner, accused of a crime, to be judged in his own court. This privilege is still enjoyed by British, French, Americans, and citizens of some of the smaller European states.

ous combination of influences. She had been educated in a southern Christian college in the United States. She had worked with her husband as his secretary and become imbued with his ideal of a new independent China, freed from war lords and internal abuses and also from foreign political and commercial exploitation. She had also absorbed many Russian Communist ideas from Michael Borodin, the Soviet political adviser. Slight and lithe in figure, Orientally graceful in manner, she displayed a constancy in her political convictions which few of her associates in the short-lived Hankow Government could have equaled. In her devotion, her sincerity, her un-Chinese indifference to money, she resembled Sofia Perovskaya, Vera Figner, and other heroines of the early Russian revolutionary movement.

As not infrequently happens, idealism and constancy of faith, in the case of Madame Sun Yat-sen, were not associated with the strongest and most discriminating of minds. Russian Communism became a kind of religious dogma to her, especially during the shut-in, secluded life which she led after the radical phase of the Chinese revolution had been checked. I was deeply sorry, during my later stay in the Far East, to see her name signed, in all good faith, to descriptions of Soviet conditions which were grotesque in their unreality.

Wang Ching-wei, the only prominent Kuomintang leader who has passed at least part of the way into the Japanese camp, was another interesting figure whom I met in Hankow. As a student he had tried to kill the Manchu Prince Regent; his sentence of life imprisonment was ended when the imperial regime was overthrown. This circumstance, along with his close association with Sun Yat-sen, lent a certain romantic glamour to his personality. But even at that time I carried away from a talk with him an impression of softness, even of irresolution which would easily explain his later decision that the struggle against Japan was hopeless.

Both at this time and on the occasion of a later meeting in Nanking in 1935 (a few days before an assassin almost killed him) he conveyed an impression of youth and of great personal charm. A classical scholar, he was the type of man who could more easily perform an act of personal heroism than lead a mass movement. During our talk he laid special stress on his efforts to put a stop to the "excesses" of the revolution.

Sun Fo, the son of Sun Yat-sen by an earlier marriage, also

emphasized the point that the participation of Communists in the Cabinet was designed to bridle, not to encourage, their revolutionary activity. Indeed the revolution in Hankow at the time of my visit in June and July was in retreat all along the line. An extremist peasant movement in the neighboring Hupeh Province, accompanied by land confiscation and the slaughter of some of the rural gentry, had been ruthlessly smashed by the military authorities. The Hankow generals were discussing with Chiang Kai-shek and Feng Yu-hsiang the advisability of getting rid of the Russians and directing the Nationalist regime along more moderate lines. Well known Chinese Communists and left-wing Nationalists were beginning to disappear, to go into hiding. An open breach between the Kuomintang and the Communists was in the air.

A good deal of the secret history of this period I only learned later. Hankow, sweltering in central China heat, was a scene of complicated intrigues. The city was fairly swarming with international Communist agents, Russian and foreign, masquerading as journalists, trade-union representatives, and what not. Both among these Soviet agents in China and among the party leaders in Moscow there were strong differences of opinion as to how the course of the Chinese revolution should be directed.

Stalin favored a moderate line of tactics for the Chinese Communists. They were to work in co-operation with the Kuomintang, keeping their party organization intact, to be sure, carrying on as much revolutionary propaganda as possible among the workers and peasants, but not pursuing such an aggressive policy as would lead to a split.

Trotsky and his followers denounced this program as "sabotage of the Chinese revolution," especially after the defection of Chiang Kai-shek. I spent a large part of one day in Hankow talking with two Russian Trotskyists who were convinced that the time for a breach between the Chinese Communists and the Kuomintang was long overdue.

"It is disgraceful for Communists to be sitting in a government whose troops are shooting down peasant revolutionaries," they argued. "What the Communists should do is to force a choice between revolution and counterrevolution on the Kuomintang waverers. They should take the lead in the revolution, create special workers' divisions in the army, seize the Hankow arsenal, and get the supply of arms into their hands."

These views were rejected as impracticable by Michael Borodin, the Soviet mystery man behind the scenes of the national government and the most interesting personality I encountered in Hankow. I had two long talks with Borodin; and, while he naturally had a good many secrets to keep in his double capacity as Soviet agent and political adviser to the Chinese Nationalists, he set forth a vivid panorama of the Chinese situation as he saw it from an excellent point of vantage. A big man, physically, with dark hair and eyes and a deep resonant voice, a Russian Jew by origin (his original name was Gruzenberg), Borodin had the background of many radical Russian emigrants to America. He and his wife had kept a school, mainly for the benefit of immigrants who were learning English. Retaining a foundation of Marxist thought, Borodin had added a superstructure of American practicality and adaptability.

By temperament he was admirably qualified for the work to which he had been assigned in China. Russia is closer to the Orient, geographically and psychologically, than to the countries of Western Europe, and Borodin understood the Chinese much better than the average foreign diplomat or Shanghai taipan (business man). Without bullying or swaggering, by sheer force of personality and an astute use of the Soviet favors in arms and technical advice which he had at his disposal, he bent the pliable Kuomintang intellectuals, very new at the game of political organization, to his will and dominated Kuomintang Congresses and executive committees almost as completely as Stalin ruled the Communist organizations in Russia.

With the natural instinct of a Marxist he had made a close study of the Chinese social and economic system. This convinced him that China, to a very large degree, was living in a pre-capitalist era, that its need was first national unification and freedom from its semicolonial status, followed by a long period of development of its industries and natural resources as a prelude to a possible socialist order in the future.

Borodin viewed China with the eyes of a realist, not of a doctrinaire. His ambitions for the country were not, I think, very different from those of many modern-minded Chinese Nationalists. But events did not develop as smoothly as he would have desired. The northern march of the revolutionary armies threw out crackling sparks of revolutionary ideas which burst into uncon-



trollable flames. An epidemic of social unrest and ferment set in.

Students ceased to study and marched in endless demonstrations. Laborers, often with violence, demanded higher and higher wages. Peasants began to seize land and refused to pay rent. This in turn provoked the hostile reaction of the well-to-do and middle classes which had found expression in Chiang Kai-shek's breakaway. And this same spirit was spreading rapidly in the provinces under the control of the Hankow Government. Revolutionary vitality was ebbing away.

Borodin was in the position of a magician who for a time had forced the loose shifting Chinese sand to coalesce; but now his spell was broken, and the sand was again disintegrating. Up to the end he played his game skillfully, pitting one general, one group of politicians against another; but the tide of events was too strong for him, and when I saw him he knew that his mission in China was almost ended.

A breach between the Kuomintang and the Communists was hastened because Stalin, pursuing his familiar tactics of appropriating his opponents' views while continuing to persecute them, had sent a secret message to Borodin and to M. N. Roy, a Hindu who was the representative of the Communist International in Hankow, demanding that the Chinese Communists form special military units and carry out their own solution of the agrarian problem. Roy, for motives which are not altogether clear, showed this compromising document to Wang Ching-wei, who then decided that it was necessary for the Kuomintang to break with the Communists. Against the protests of Eugene Chen and Madame Sun Yat-sen, he won the support of the majority of the Kuomintang leaders for this view. In my last talk with him Borodin, after referring with some bitterness to the cowardice and treachery which, as he felt, some of the Nationalist leaders had shown, threw out a cryptic hint:

"The Chinese wrestler teaches his pupils nine ways in which to throw opponents, but keeps the tenth and best way for himself. I have taught the Chinese a good many tricks of revolution; but there is one which is still my own secret."

Perhaps the trick which Borodin held in reserve was that of open Communist revolt. Some of the units in the Nationalist army where Communist influence was strongest rebelled at Nanchang shortly afterwards. This was the beginning of a prolonged civil war which

ended in an informal reconciliation between the Communists and the Kuomintang early in 1937, shortly before the beginning of China's great struggle with Japan.

In Hankow I saw a good deal of Vincent Sheean, who had come to China after doing a splendid job of adventurous reporting of the higher order in Morocco, and of the Prohmes, an American journalistic couple who, with a wandering free lance named Milly Mitchell, constituted the foreign staff of the *People's Tribune*. This was an English-language propaganda organ which was supported by the government and vastly annoyed the still enraged and terrified foreign community of the city.

Rayna Prohme was not a person whom one would easily forget. Everything about her—the alert, challenging face, the mop of red-gold hair, the taut slight figure—suggested love of action and intensity of feeling. A Chicago girl, she had thrown herself into the Chinese revolutionary movement. In her young enthusiasm she probably took it more seriously than many of the psychologically more aged Chinese themselves. During the ebb tide of revolution at Hankow she hoped against hope to the end that the Kuomintang leaders would remain loyal to her conception of the revolution, which was that of Borodin and Madame Sun Yat-sen.

She was one of the casualties of the revolution. Only a few months later I was present at her funeral in Moscow, where she had died of a sudden attack of brain fever, the result, very largely, of overwork in China and of disappointment at the collapse of the left-wing movement in which she had been such an active participant. Her husband, a victim of tuberculosis, died a few years later in Honolulu on the anniversary of Rayna's own death.

Sheean's agency asked him to "get adventures"; so he set out to travel overland from Hankow to Peking. This meant crossing two of the very loosely held Chinese "fronts" and traversing an intermediate no man's land where Red Spears, Heaven Gates, and other bands with picturesque names and brigand proclivities were roaming about. The prospect for adventures seemed promising. But Sheean arrived in Peking without having suffered anything except a too monotonous diet of noodles with garlic, the standard peasant fare of north China, where rice does not grow. On the other hand, as if to illustrate the haphazard workings of chance in matters of life and death, a young Australian correspondent of the *Times* of London named Riley, whom I met in Hankow walked

a little distance out of Chengchow, a railway town north of Hankow and disappeared as completely as if he had been swallowed up in the wilds of Tibet. Months elapsed before the British consular authorities established the fact that he had fallen in with a group of Chinese soldiers who casually murdered him.

Sheean's experience in Hankow evidently left a strong impression on him. Some of the most vivid and deeply felt passages in his "Personal History" deal with China. And many years later, when I happened to pick up a copy of his novel "Sanfelice" in a Shanghai bookstore, the story, to me, recalled Hankow in 1927 as much as Naples after the French Revolution, where the action takes place. For the pattern of the short-lived Neapolitan Republic was very similar to that of the weak Hankow regime which evaporated in the summer of 1927.

One advisedly speaks of an evaporation rather than of an overthrow, for everything went off in old-fashioned Chinese style, by accommodation rather than by violence and without any killings—except of humble coolies and peasants. The more radical members of the government were given time to disappear, one by one, into the safety of foreign concessions.

Borodin was sent off to Russia with honors and testimonials of gratitude. I saw him occasionally after my return to Moscow, but I always felt that he cut rather a pathetic figure, editing a wretched little English-language propagandist sheet and often dreaming, no doubt, of the days when he was almost king in China.

Sailing down the Yangtze, on my way back to Shanghai, I walked up and down the deck of the little river steamer, trying to evaluate the process of revolutionary frustration of which I had witnessed the culmination in terms of my knowledge of the Russian Revolution. Why had a large-scale social upheaval miscarried in China, despite the Soviet aid? If the extent of widespread poverty and misery were the main factor in promoting revolution, the Chinese failure was difficult to explain. There was far more stark poverty, close to the starvation line and often sinking below it, in China than there had been in Russia in 1917.

But there were other elements in the situation which dammed the stream of revolution in China. The factory working class there was both smaller in relation to the general population and more ignorant than it had been in Russia. The Chinese peasant had an infinite number of grievances, of which the basic one was that

he very often did not have enough to eat; but there was no small recognizable class of aristocrats, owning huge estates against which the rage of the peasants could be directed, with a prospect of slaughter and pillage.

Unlike the Russian Communists, the Chinese Nationalist revolutionaries had no hard-and-fast, clear-cut dogmas. When it came to a decisive crisis their instinct was to waver, to seek a compromise. Moreover the technique of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution, the initial seizure of power in the cities and large towns, followed by a gradual spreading out to the villages, could not be followed in China, with its loose, sprawling immense bulk, its relatively few key cities and its imperfect means of communication. (These same considerations, incidentally, are a great handicap to the Japanese in their effort to master China by holding key cities and railway lines.)

Seed had been sown in China in those stormy years that would bear fruit later. But the broad impression which I carried away from China at this time was that of a huge inchoate mass of sand where only the fiercest storm could slightly change the shapes of the dunes.

The months which I spent in Shanghai were less interesting than the weeks in Hankow. There was a certain fascination about the city, if only because of its cosmopolitanism. Nowhere in the world, perhaps, is there such a conglomerate population. There were the millions of Chinese, of whom the majority kept little shops, pulled rickshaws, carried burdens on poles, took out the nightsoil, sweated in the textile mills or small handicraft shops. The minority who had made big money in government or business or opium lived in luxurious mansions in the French Concession, often with a hired Russian ex-officer to guard them against kidnapers and assassins. There were the few thousand Britons, more intent than they would have been at home on dressing for dinner, turning out to see the trooping of the colors on the King's Birthday, observing a dozen odd little class and occupational distinctions. There were the more informal, rough-and-ready Americans, with fewer vested interests in Shanghai but with a more active spirit of salesmanship.

One could walk through whole streets of the French Concession, notably the Avenue Joffre, where Russian was the predominant language. Almost 20,000 Russian fugitives from the Revolution had settled down in the cosmopolitan city. The numerous Russian cabaret dancers were often the consolation of bachelors, permanent

and temporary, and the terror of Anglo-Saxon wives. One of the local Russian newspapers published an article under the somewhat ambiguous title: "The Russian Woman: The Queen of Shanghai." This led to a typically Russian long discussion in the paper, first as to whether the Russian woman really was the "queen," and secondly as to whether it was anything to boast of.

Across Soochow Creek, in Hongkew, one could find a little Tokyo. But it is surprising, in the light of later years, to remember how inconspicuous the Japanese were in China at that time. It was the Japanese policy to lie low, to let the British bear the brunt of Chinese boycotts and antiforeign demonstrations. I had few Japanese contacts and did not visit Japan during this first experience of the Far East.

Almost every European nation was represented in Shanghai's polyglot population, and a final touch of exotic color was lent by the huge bearded Sikh policemen who maintained order among the teeming Chinese with a stern hand. A city of so many peoples, Shanghai was a home to none, except perhaps to the Chinese who were born there and to the Russians who had no other place to go. Almost everyone else was thinking of how to make money as quickly as possible in an unhealthy climate in order to be able to retire. The Englishman was thinking of his villa in a London suburb; the Japanese, of his little house and garden, perhaps with a view of Mount Fuji; the German, of some old city on the Baltic with Gothic spires or of some little town in Bavaria.

There was something hectic, unnatural, depressing about Shanghai, especially in the hot, sticky summer months which I spent there. Going to the East without previous experience or warning, I contracted what might be called the children's diseases of the Shanghai newcomer: dysentery, in its milder forms, and violent sneezing summer colds. Even before it was overrun by the refugees of the Sino-Japanese war Shanghai was a heavily germ-laden city.

I did not find much congenial company among the die-hard Shanghailanders, whom Arthur Ransome of the *Manchester Guardian* had depicted very well in a scathing article entitled "The Shanghai Mind." They made a practice of forgathering around the longest bar in the world, in the Shanghai Club<sup>1</sup> and cursing

<sup>1</sup> "The longest bar in the world closed today" was the stereotyped snappy lead of American newspaper stories about general strikes in Shanghai.

the "Reds," among whom they included the most moderate Chinese Nationalists, the imprecations becoming more lurid with each new round of whisky and soda. There was also much gratuitous advice to the home governments as to how to handle the situation in a firm way.

My Shanghai friends were a variegated group. J. B. Powell was always genial and stimulating. I became quite well acquainted with Wilbur Burton, free-lance journalist and writer, who was working for the Nationalist News Agency, an organization whose flimsy economic supports crumbled when the Hankow Government collapsed. Burton, a natural-born rebel, was instinctively inclined to thumb his nose at the Shanghai taipans. He went about proclaiming his opinion that the only way to "restore the prestige of the white race" (a mouth-filling phrase much favored by Shanghai old residents) would be to deport a large number of its representatives from the city.

I must confess, incidentally, that I could never recognize the basis for the widespread belief among Shanghai foreigners that the moving picture had lowered the character of the white overlord in the eyes of the Shanghai coolie. For a Chinese certainly did not have to go to a moving picture theater to see white men pursuing women, drink, and drugs and indulging in all the vices which the gaudiest Hollywood film might have depicted.

Burton had read a good deal in a desultory way and liked to intersperse homespun Indiana conversation with an occasional Latin tag. He was an excellent raconteur, and we kept up a regular correspondence after I had left Shanghai for Moscow and he had gone back to America. He came back to Shanghai in 1931 and several years later made a leisurely trip back to the United States by way of Asia, Europe, and South America. Some of his private memoranda on adventures, amatory, intellectual, and aesthetic, would make very interesting reading if they could ever be published.

An equally interesting acquaintance of a different type was Dr. Werner Vogel, Secretary of the German Chamber of Commerce and correspondent for a group of German newspapers. In contrast to the vast majority of the Anglo-American commercial community, he was an excellent Chinese scholar; and he gave me some initiation into Chinese history and psychology. In return I gave him some entertainment with vivid descriptions of work for

the Amalgamated News and the naïve religious historiology of Mr. Bruce Barton.

But congenial friends in Shanghai were few. The work, now that the atmosphere of revolutionary tension was relaxing, was not particularly absorbing. Indeed I remember this stay in Shanghai as one of the few periods in my life when I had too little rather than too much work on my hands. I was glad when the *Monitor* asked me to return to Moscow in the autumn. On the journey I caught a few glimpses of the glory of Peking, probably the most beautiful city in Asia. Then and up to the time of the Japanese occupation this old Chinese capital was one of the softest and pleasantest places for anyone with some Oriental tastes to settle down in retirement.

Harbin, with its crisp autumn weather, was already a foretaste of Russia. In this North Manchurian city there were some 60,000 Russians, about two-thirds Whites and one-third Reds, Soviet employees of the Chinese Eastern Railway, which runs across North Manchuria and was then under joint Soviet-Chinese operation. Russians of both types mingled at a performance of Borodin's "Prince Igor" which I attended in Harbin. I could feel the homesickness of the émigrés in the storms of applause that followed the splendid aria: "Give me freedom."

My most interesting meeting in Harbin was with Professor Ustryalov, one of the most original minds among the emigrants, a man of unusual brilliance of literary style. As early as 1921 Ustryalov was advising the émigrés and the intelligentsia in Russia to make their peace with the Soviet regime as the permanent national government of the country. At the time of my visit he was praising Stalin (somewhat to the latter's embarrassment) as the champion of moderation and gradual counterrevolution who was exterminating the radical Trotzkyists. Subsequent developments revealed some mistakes in Ustryalov's estimates of the situation, which were based on a too schematic comparison of the French and Russian revolutions. Both as a conversationalist and as a writer, however, he was thought-provoking, and a book of his collected articles which he gave me was an interesting piece of reading for the long journey across Siberia.

Ustryalov, after urging the émigrés for many years to become reconciled with the Soviet regime, decided after the Japanese occupation of Manchuria to put his own theory into practice and returned to Russia. Here he was swallowed up in the mist of un-

certainty that surrounds every Russian who returns to his native land. The chances are probably even whether he was assigned to some more or less congenial work or found himself in a prison or concentration camp.

I returned to Moscow in October and greeted my four-months-old daughter, held up in the arms of a sturdy Russian nurse. We had named her Nadyezhda Elizabeth. Nadyezhda was for a very dear and precious Russian friend, Nadyezhda Viktorovna, now happily outside the Soviet Union, who had helped Sonya very much during her childbirth. Elizabeth was my mother's name. So long as we were in Russia Nadyezhda or Nadya was our daughter's name. But when she went abroad with us and began to mix with American children Elizabeth proved more manageable and convenient; and it is under this name that she is growing up.

From the revolution in frustration which I had seen in China I had returned to a revolution that had "arrived," and that was going through the invariable aftermath of bureaucratic degeneration and loss of the original idealism. But because the Russian Bolsheviks had learned a trick (which earlier revolutionaries did not know but which the Fascists were quick to learn from them), the trick of the self-perpetuating single party, itself ruled by a supposedly infallible dictator, and ruling the country by an adept combination of propaganda and terrorism, their regime maintained an external continuity which one does not find in the changeful years after the Great Revolution in France.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: *Retreat from Moscow*

*I returned from China to Moscow* to find the Trotskyist revolt against Stalin's domination of the Communist party at its height. Gregory Zinoviev and Leo Kamenev, two of Lenin's oldest associates, who had originally sided with Stalin against Trotsky, had now been thrust from their own seats of power by the cunning Oriental, who discarded them as soon as they had served their purpose. They realized too late that in giving Stalin their unconditional support against Trotsky they had tied a noose around their own necks. They were to realize this still more forcibly when they felt the muzzles of Gay-Pay-Oo executioners' pistols at the backs of their heads in 1936.

Zinoviev and Kamenev were now making common cause with Trotsky. While personal antagonisms and thwarted personal ambitions played a great part in the controversy (no prima donna has nerves so quivering and sensitive as those of the revolutionary who has suddenly risen to absolute power) there were also ideological issues in dispute. The three prominent rebels attacked Stalin's policies both in the international and in the internal field.

There had been two distinct setbacks to Stalin's efforts to promote revolution outside of Russia's frontiers. The fruits of the Chinese revolution had gone distinctly sour, from the Communist standpoint, and a good deal of money and munitions which had been sent to China could only be written off as a bad investment.

Equally unsuccessful had been the attempt to undermine the British social order by establishing close fraternal relations with British trade unions. While some of the British labor leaders were extremely naïve in accepting the tall tales of Soviet propagandists

about what had been done for the workers in Russia, they were almost all hardheaded realists about the methods which could be usefully employed in England. They also possessed a strong sense of national pride. All the effects of carefully conducted tours in Russia, punctuated by frequent banquets and amicable joint resolutions, faded away as soon as the British trade unionists realized that they were expected to take orders from Moscow in the conduct of the general strike of 1926 (that amazingly peaceful and abortive experiment in mass class struggle) and the subsequent miners' strike.

It is also questionable whether this attempt to advance proletarian solidarity, reinforced by compulsory deductions from wages and salaries for the support of British strikers, won any great propagandist success among the Russian workers themselves. It was a stock anecdote, or satirical story, of the time that the Russian worker had to support "a wife, a family, and six unemployed British miners." And the delegations of miners' wives who came to plead for funds lost much of their effectiveness because their members, dressed simply enough by Western standards, were far better clothed than any Russian working women.

As regards internal policy the Trotzkyists accused Stalin of lacking any coherent plan for the industrialization of the country and of failing to squeeze enough out of the kulaks, or more well-to-do peasants, in taxes and in grain. Russia's "iron age" of terror and universal privation, culminating in famine, set in when Stalin, never fertile in original ideas himself, appropriated these two theories of his more brilliant opponent and proceeded to apply them with Genghiz Khan thoroughness.

To some extent my heart was with the Trotzkyists. Any opposition is like a breath of fresh air in the stale and stifling atmosphere of dictatorships; and the Trotzkyists, like other dissident groups, included a high percentage of intelligent and idealistic party members, because the stupid, the conformists, and the careerists naturally went in a solid block for the ruling clique. But my head was with Stalin at this stage of the controversy.

The Trotzkyists, after all, scored only negative points against Stalin's Chinese and British labor policies. My own observations in China did not lead me to believe that the Trotzkyist policy of pressing for an immediate revolution along Russian lines would have stood any serious chance of success. And I was convinced

that the Trotskyist proposals for pressing harder on the more well-to-do peasants would only lead to paralysis of production and to food shortage in the growing cities. The "village poor," on whom the Trotskyists placed great hopes, were, so far as I had observed them in action or inaction, barely able to feed themselves by their own efforts and certainly not capable of raising a surplus for the city markets or for export.

Trotsky and his new allies, Zinoviev and Kamenev, overestimated the effect of their old laurels. Each had a small band of personally devoted followers, of which Trotsky's was much the largest. And these groups included many old revolutionaries in high posts. But a new generation was growing up to which the great names of 1917 meant little. Stalin's henchmen in the party machine worked night and day to limit their chances of appealing to the party rank and file. They were not permitted, for instance, to publish the platform, stating their views, which they wished to submit to the impending party congress. Executions of opposition Communists had not yet come into fashion; but there were a number of arrests of the more active Trotskyists, and there was much use of the familiar method of sending dissenters to backwoods posts, all in the sacred name of party discipline.

There were several suicides, of which the most pathetic was that of a sick old Communist named Adolf Joffe. He had been employed in several diplomatic missions and had signed with Sun Yat-sen the first agreement for co-operation between the Soviet Union and China. As a known Trotskyist, Joffe had been subjected to various pinpricks and had been refused the funds to go abroad for medical treatment which would have been readily available for any adherent of Stalin. He left behind a last expression of his political views in the form of a letter. Its publication was promptly forbidden, but it was mimeographed and surreptitiously circulated by the Trotskyists.

Another forbidden document which was being furtively passed about at this time was Lenin's own political testament, characterizing Stalin as a "rough and disloyal man" and proposing his removal from the strategic post of Secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee. Many of the Trotskyists were born rebels against authority who had chafed under the restraints of the Soviet state and enjoyed the return to illegal meetings, with admission by password, and to the distribution of proscribed literature.

But such methods were no longer so effective as they had been

under Tsarism. Thanks to the far-flung Communist Party organization, there were potential spies and informers in every factory, in every office, in every large house, since it is a primary duty of every party member to report cases of disaffection. From the failure of the Trotskyists I could gauge the inevitable limitations of the subsequent underground struggles against Fascism in Italy and National Socialism in Germany, since these latter regimes also have their hosts of informers scattered among the people.

The climax of the revolt against Stalin's rule was reached on November 7, 1927, the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev tried to introduce a new element into the cut-and-dried program by speaking to the assembled crowds at various public places in Moscow; but their plan was known or suspected in advance, and organized groups of Moscow Communists howled them down. For Trotsky this must have been a bitter anticlimax after the historic date of November 7, 1917, when he was the directing spirit in the seizure of power in Petrograd.

Here and there small groups of demonstrators displayed flags with Trotskyist slogans; but these were quickly suppressed, and their effect was lost in the customary huge mass demonstration. The most ingenious of these manifestations was that of a group of Chinese students at the recently founded Sun Yat-sen University, which had been established to train young Chinese in the doctrines of Marx and Lenin. Trotskyist heresy had evidently made progress there, for a considerable number of the students appeared with a huge dragon float, which they suddenly took apart, revealing some such slogans as: "Long live Trotsky and Zinoviev, leaders of the World Revolution." These students, mostly of the educated classes, were promptly packed off to China after this escapade. Their successors were recruited among Chinese "proletarians," who were considered more proof against subversive ideas and were probably not very accessible to ideas of any kind.

After this demonstration Trotsky was sent into exile at Alma Ata, a remote town in Kazakstan, not far from the borders of Chinese Turkestan. A year afterwards he was deported, Turkey finally consenting to receive him after a good many countries had declined him as a too formidable visitor. After periods of residence in Norway and France he found what seems to be a permanent refuge in Mexico.

Trotsky now makes the impression of a lonely and embittered

old man. Almost all his prominent political friends in Russia have been killed or forced to buy their lives by repudiating him. Stalin's implacable vengeance has fallen on several members of Trotzky's family who were imprudent enough to remain in the Soviet Union; and Trotzky has quarreled, on personal or doctrinal grounds, with many of his former sympathizers in the ranks of the radical intelligentsia in foreign countries.

Zinoviev and Kamenev recanted (both were weak characters, especially Zinoviev, and recantation under pressure came easily to them) and were received back into the party. Then they fluttered like moths around the candles of plots, real or imaginary,<sup>1</sup> and were among the first to be put to death in Stalin's crusade of extermination against the old Bolsheviks.

The suppression of the Trotzkyists did not ease the severe crisis from which the Soviet economy was suffering. A system that was half state-controlled and half left to private initiative was breaking down. The Soviet currency was beginning to crack. The ruble had been officially stabilized at its prewar value (a little over fifty cents) in 1924. Already one could obtain considerably more than this official rate of exchange through various mysterious private channels. And during the bleak later years of the Five Year Plan a dollar would buy forty or fifty rubles.

The peasants, often unable to buy the goods which they needed with paper rubles, were beginning to hold back their grain from the market. The state industries were too inefficient to give them the necessary products. So, at a time when other governments were concerned with the problem of how to dispose of their farmers' surplus grain, the Soviet regime, master of a naturally rich agricultural land, found itself faced with difficulties in feeding its towns.

There were several palliative measures, favored by almost all the Russian agricultural experts (many of whom were subsequently shot and imprisoned for this reason) and by many of the more moderate and reasonable Communists, which would have brought the country out of the crisis without plunging it into the mass tragedies which I witnessed from 1929 until 1933. The restoration of private property in land, under certain restrictions limiting the

<sup>1</sup> In a later chapter I set forth the reasons why I believe the sensational confessions at the trials of the old Bolsheviks in 1936, 1937 and 1938 were largely fraudulent.

size of holdings and preventing speculation, would have been a tremendous stimulus to agricultural productivity. It would have brought much more land into the hands of naturally good farmers (under the Soviet system, until the introduction of collective farming, the size of a peasant's holding was determined by the number of "eaters" in his family). And it would have given the average peasant an incentive to save and invest the money which he often scarcely knew what to do with. The importation of manufactured goods from abroad would have broken the log jam in economic exchange between city and village. A more conciliatory attitude toward foreign concessions would have brought more capital into the country and increased the scope of foreign trade.

Logically it is some such policy that Stalin should have adopted after he had rejected the left-wing criticisms of the Trotzkyists. But sometime during the winter of 1928-1929 he decided on a complete change of course. After destroying Trotzky as a political rival he took over the latter's ideas and even went beyond them. The program to which Stalin committed himself (it was probably not framed all of one piece at the beginning, but developed rapidly under the pressure of events) could be briefly summarized as follows.

Russia was to be industrialized as rapidly as possible, with a special eye to war production and with complete disregard of what sufferings this process, in a country poor in capital, would impose on the population. The peasantry, as a class of small individual proprietors, was to be "liquidated," to use a favorite Soviet euphemism for execution or complete destruction. Its more prosperous class, the kulaks, was to be completely despoiled and economically exterminated, reduced to slavery, very much in the fashion of wars of antiquity. The masses of the peasants were to be bent to the yoke of the collective farm. Under this system they would be compelled to work as the state directed, to make such deliveries as the state required, to receive such pay or rations as the state might choose to give them. No more nonsense about holding back grain because the government industries could not give the peasants any adequate compensation for it!

The restricted amount of internal private trade which had been permitted under the *Nep* was to be swept away. The whole class of small shopkeepers, independent producers, peddlers, owners of restaurants was to be liquidated by methods uncommonly similar

to those which the Nazis were to use a few years later against the Jews. These methods varied from arrest and outright confiscation to the presentation of impossible bills for imaginary tax arrears. And this program, involving, as it did, the uprooting and destruction of millions of human beings and an immense aggravation of the hardships of the entire population, was inevitably carried out with an accompaniment of terrorism that suggested the fiercest years of revolution and civil war.

This epoch which Stalin inaugurated completely changed the face of Russia physically and spiritually. It created desolate wastes where there had once been flourishing Cossack and Ukrainian villages in the valleys of the Don and the Kuban and the Dnieper. It created in town and countryside such a food shortage as no European country has ever known, except under the stress of war and blockade. It planted mushroom industrial towns where there had formerly been nomad encampments. It sent exploring parties into the arctic and into the more remote parts of Asiatic Russia. In the name of progress and rationalism it silenced the bells of Moscow's "forty times forty" churches.<sup>1</sup> All over the country, churches were torn down or converted to secular uses while priests, ministers, and rabbis by thousands disappeared into prisons and concentration camps.<sup>2</sup>

Russia was pushed ahead along the road of industrialization during those hungry years, the atmosphere of which has been admirably preserved in two books by foreign observers, "Assignment to Utopia," by Eugene Lyons, and "Winter in Moscow," by Malcolm Muggeridge. Production was faulty and halting, and quality was extremely defective. But out of the surplus resources which were sometimes squeezed out of a people pressed down to an extremely bare subsistence level, new factories went up under the direction of American and German engineers.

Apologists for the Soviet Union have even been able to repre-

<sup>1</sup>Even in prewar days Moscow never possessed half of the sixteen hundred churches with which it is credited in the old Russian phrase.

<sup>2</sup>I recently noticed some figures about the number of pastors in prison in Germany in an American radical magazine. It is very far from my desire or intention to deny the persecution of sincere and outspoken upholders of Christianity under the Nazi regime of deification of race and the state. But the figure seemed almost ludicrously small, measured by Russian standards. The explanation lies in the fact that in Germany a pastor must usually do or say something more or less overt to get himself arrested, whereas in Russia any minister of religion is fair game for the Gay-Pay-Oo, no matter how resolutely he may eschew politics.

sent this era as one of progress and general good cheer by using soothing and misleading euphemisms ("belt-tightening" for acute malnutrition and even famine, "state-assisted migration" for the packing off of old men, women, and children to arctic wildernesses). A detached observer could draw up a plausible balance sheet, reckoning this or that asset in national military and industrial strength against this or that "liquidation" of individuals or classes.

At first I employed this method and I continued it, although with an increasingly bad conscience, until the culminating horror of the period, the gigantic and entirely avoidable famine of 1932-1933, convinced me that I was engaged in a system of false bookkeeping. Indeed I had felt all along that the items on the two sides of the ledger were of intrinsically unequal value. For instance, when I went to Magnitogorsk (where a large iron and steel works had been erected in the Urals) and learned that many of the kulak children who had been sent there with their parents had died of hunger and typhoid for lack of adequate food and proper water, I did not for a moment feel that the first fact was any compensation for the second. After all, steel plants have been built in other countries without killing children.

Stalin once called 1929 "the year of great change," and no one could dispute the accuracy of this characterization. From that year until 1933 (when the stark shortage even of bread began to be relieved) Russia lived in a state of strain, of nervous tension, of hunger and terror that might well have been associated with an unsuccessful war. It is frequently suggested that military necessity, the danger of attack from outside, explained and justified the rigors of the first Five Year Plan. The excuse always seemed to me singularly unconvincing. Japan or any other foreign enemy could not have desired better internal conditions for an attack (general hunger and resultant apathy, desperate bitterness of a considerable part of the population) than Stalin's policies provided during those years. It was simply Soviet luck that Japan still had its hands full in Manchuria and that Nazi Germany was only coming into existence.

The standard of living, which had been gradually rising from the low point which it touched after the civil war and the famine of 1921-1922, fell disastrously. One simple article of food after another—bacon, cheese, butter, sugar—became a luxury, freely obtainable only by a small group of highly placed Communists and



Soviet officials and by foreigners with their precious foreign currency. The shelves in the co-operative stores became bare. The prices on the free market, where a limited amount of more or less surreptitious trade went on, rose ten- or twenty-fold, without any corresponding rise in wages. A single carrot, I recall, was priced at a ruble at a time when the monthly wage of the average industrial worker did not exceed a hundred rubles. Sonya and I discussed the feasibility of giving the ruble a carrot backing, instead of its non-existent gold coverage. Domestic animals felt the pinch, along with human beings. A Russian friend remarked:

“Our cat has learned to eat cucumbers; and there is nothing more humiliating for a cat than to eat cucumbers.”

In the country districts there were wholesale epidemics among animals, partly for lack of fodder, partly because of the inexperience of many of the young managers of collective farms, who insisted on putting all the cows, sheep, and other animals in communal barns and were utterly at a loss what to do when contagious diseases broke out among them.

Our domestic housekeeping was naturally somewhat deranged. Once we had acquired what we considered a rare gastronomic treasure in the shape of two geese from the country. We invited friends from an Embassy to partake of the feast which we anticipated. Great was our demoralization when the birds proved to be so bitter as to be almost inedible. The explanation which we later obtained from our cook, the intermediary in the purchase of the geese, was that the peasant woman who owned them had turned them out to feed on a near-by swamp, where they must have digested some uncommonly bitter roots. A trip in the country, where the shortage was even greater than in Moscow, had to be fitted out like an arctic expedition, with an abundance of canned and preserved foodstuffs. Soap and toilet paper were completely out of the knowledge of provincial Russia at this time.

Our own inconveniences, however, were entirely petty compared with the sufferings and deprivations of the Russians all around us. When I went to America on a lecture tour in the winter of 1932-1933 I was shocked to find that many people believed that the Soviet Union was in a state of booming prosperity, happily contrasted with the depression in the United States. During this trip I met an old acquaintance, a former New York schoolteacher named Benjamin Glassberg who was director of relief in Mil-

waukee. He gave me a printed list of the foodstuffs which were regularly supplied to the unemployed at their homes. When I read this list to some Russian friends in Moscow they burst out in amazement:

“But no employed worker in Russia could hope for such a variety of fruit and vegetables. A Soviet official would be glad to be sure of such a ration. And our newspapers tell us all the time that your unemployed are all starving.”

A complete collapse of production as a result of malnutrition was averted by the introduction of a system of factory and office restaurants, where indifferent meals were served at moderate prices; but this did not take care of the large numbers of people who were not connected with factories and offices, including the families of workers and employees, and was not applied at all in many small towns. Money lost most of its value because there was so little to be bought. (“The Russians are the richest people in the world—because they don’t know what to do with their money” was one of the acid jokes of the time. Another was the suggestion that Mikoyan, Commissar for Supply, should be placed in charge of the struggle with prostitution, since he had already so effectively abolished meat, butter, shoes, and textiles.) But an elaborate system of privilege and inequality grew up around the distribution of food and restaurant cards. In many large plants there were eating rooms of varying quality, the best for the Soviet executives and the foreign engineers, the worst for the forced laborers, who received a bare subsistence ration of bread, grits, and thin soup.

A hungry people is a bloodthirsty people. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a government which cannot give its people bread feels under a certain psychological compulsion to provide them with more and more gaudy circuses, in the shape of imaginary sinister plots, followed by trials and executions. If Robespierre had been able to give his hungry followers more food, his appetite for heads would have been less voracious.

One of the most ghastly features of 1929 and subsequent years was the decimation of the Russian intelligentsia through wholesale arrests, followed by sentences of imprisonment, banishment, and execution. Almost every class of educated men suffered in turn: engineers, agricultural experts, historians, bacteriologists, economists, statisticians.

When I was on vacation in a peaceful Tyrolean village in 1930,

my attention was forcibly recalled to Russia by a news item to the effect that forty-eight experts connected with the Soviet food industry had been butchered without open trial on charges of having disorganized the country's meat supply. I felt instinctively, from my knowledge of Soviet mentality, methods, and conditions, that these unfortunate men were victimized scapegoats; and I went about for the rest of my vacation making quite superfluous anti-Communist propoganda among the good Catholic peasants whom I encountered on my walks and climbs.

The true cause of the extreme shortage of meat and dairy products—which has persisted, in milder form, even up to the present time—was the immense slaughtering of cattle by the peasants as a protest against being dragooned into the collective farms. There were prodigious losses from this cause during the last months of 1929 and the first months of 1930, and the damage was aggravated by epidemics among the surviving animals. By 1933 the herds and flocks had fallen to about half of the 1929 figure, according to Soviet statistics. They were also far below the figure of prewar years, when the country had a smaller population to feed.

My suspicion that these forty-eight victims of food shortage had been "framed up" was only strengthened by personal observations at several sabotage and treason trials which I attended in Moscow. Characteristic of these was the arraignment of a group of engineers and professors on the charge of organizing an "Industrial Party" to overthrow the Soviet regime and to set up a counterrevolutionary dictatorship, to an accompaniment of a good deal of throwing monkey wrenches into machines and miscellaneous sabotage.

The trial had all the features of a highly organized circus. The issue was prejudged for weeks in advance, as innumerable resolutions demanding death for the traitors and saboteurs poured in from all parts of the Soviet Union. It would not, one fancies, have been healthy to express dissent from these resolutions. The son of one of the accused, displaying an excellent instinct for getting on in the Soviet world, publicly demanded his father's death. A touch of humor was added to the preliminary proceedings when the Moscow Bar Association belatedly rescinded its original wholehearted resolution in favor of shooting the defendants on the ground that this might embarrass those members of the Associa-

tion who would be charged with the conduct of the defense. For no detail was spared in this solemn legal farce, including the assignment to the accused of lawyers, who invariably displayed the most obsequious eagerness to help the prosecutor. And why not? They had wives and children of their own, and enforced departure for grim places of exile at hard labor—the Solovetzky Islands, the Narim Territory in northern Siberia, the Baltic-White Sea Canal—loomed up as a probable consequence of trying to contest the Government's case. (Some of the counsel who had vigorously defended the accused Socialist Revolutionaries in what was probably the last partly honest political trial in the Soviet Union, in 1922, were subsequently exiled.)

The trial itself, held in the large auditorium of the Trade Union Hall, against a background of bright projectors and snapping photographers, was one of the most unpleasant spectacles I have ever witnessed. The prosecutor, Krylenko, a repulsive type of unbalanced pervert,<sup>1</sup> mouthed and performed facial contortions more suggestive of an insane asylum than of a court of law, as he summed up his points against the helpless blinking defendants. The "judges" (somehow it seems unrealistic to refer, in the Soviet Union, to any such Western institution as a court, a parliament, or an election without suggestive quotation marks) were workers without judicial experience; and it was a hard trial for two or three of the more stupid-looking of them to stay awake during the prolonged sessions.

There was a conspicuous lack of the authentic drama which one would have sensed in a political trial, however passionate and unfair, held in an atmosphere of revolution and civil war. There was no foreign enemy thundering at the gates, and the stories of the elderly professors and engineers as to how they schemed to overthrow the Soviet regime seemed to me singularly lacking in credibility and conviction. In Soviet trials, where it is difficult to distinguish between the attorneys for the prosecution and the lawyers for the defense, where the accused themselves (produced

<sup>1</sup>I experienced great personal satisfaction on learning that Krylenko later fell into political disfavor and is now probably in prison, if he has not been shot. I also felt that there might be an occasional element of retributive justice in a highly unreasonable world when I saw the names of Yagoda, virtual head of the Gay-Pay-Oo during these years of terror, and of Sheboldaev, a Communist local administrator notorious for his cruelty to the peasants of the Volga and the North Caucasus, in lists of individuals who were shot during recent years.

after months and sometimes years in Gay-Pay-Oo prisons) display an eagerness, both pathetic and suspicious, to confess whatever may be laid to their charge, the only imperfect gauge of accuracy is the part of the testimony relating to persons and events outside of the Soviet Union.

And here the examining magistrate who prepared the case of the Industrial Party committed a major blunder which excited much hilarity abroad (it was never revealed in the Soviet Union) and earned for the proceedings the nickname of "the dead men's trial." Professor Leonid Ramzin, the chief defendant, signed a statement, which was published in the Soviet press, to the effect that the prospective head of the counterrevolutionary government which his organization was trying to set up was one Pavel Ryabushinsky, a well known Moscow industrialist and member of the Cadet party before the war. And the Minister of Finance was to be a certain Vishnegradsky, who had held the same office under the Tsar. Most unfortunately for the plausibility of the trial Ryabushinsky and Vishnegradsky had died in emigration, years before the alleged plottings had taken place. Ramzin testified to personal meetings with Ryabushinsky in Paris, during trips abroad. These meetings could obviously have taken place only in the spirit world.

The trial ended with death sentences for some of the accused—sentences which were, however, commuted to imprisonment. As I cabled to the *Monitor* at the time, the defendants got what they wanted: their lives. The Government got what it wanted: a series of lurid confessions of sabotage and treason.

No one who has not participated in such trials, either as inquisitor or as victim, can be dogmatically certain as to how these curiously sweeping confessions, so often at variance with demonstrable facts,<sup>1</sup> are extracted. There is no limit to the pressure, physical and moral, which an absolutist state can exert against one of its subjects from whom it wishes to extort a confession. It can subject him to the subtle torture of successive sleepless nights of

<sup>1</sup> It was not only in the trial of the Industrial party that one found damaging discrepancies between the testimony and the proved facts. It was alleged in another trial that the Menshevik leader Abramowitsch had been in Russia at a time when he could show his photograph among the delegates at an international Socialist congress in Brussels. In one of the first of the later trials of old Bolsheviki a witness named Hoelzmann declared that he had talked with Trotzky in the Hotel Bristol, of Copenhagen. The hotel, as it happens, had burned down years before the alleged talk took place.

questioning by relays of examiners.<sup>1</sup> It can promise him life if he testifies as is desired, with the alternative prospect of being shot behind closed doors if he remains obstinate. It can threaten to destroy the members of his family.

There are two bits of first-hand evidence which help to cast some light on the nature and value of testimony at public Soviet political trials. One is Madame Tchernavin's statement<sup>2</sup> that her husband, a fisheries expert, was informed that he had two choices. Either he could sign a document falsely accusing himself of sabotage, or he would be shot, his wife sent to forced labor, and his son placed in a children's home. There are few men so strong-willed that they would refuse to sign anything that might be required under such pressure.

The other bit of evidence was a personal talk with a man whom I cannot identify, since he is still in Russia. I may say, however, that he was a scientist of distinction in his field and of the highest integrity of character. He had been arrested and accused of various fantastic acts of treason and sabotage, which he refused to acknowledge. He was placed under a strict regime of solitary confinement, denied opportunities for exercise and reading and writing materials. Finally the young Gay-Pay-Oo examiner in charge of his case said to him:

"You must have been guilty of something; otherwise we wouldn't have arrested you. Confess something and you will have an easier time."

"Very well," said my acquaintance. "I am not in agreement with the Party line."<sup>3</sup>

"Hm-m, that won't do," said the examiner. "You are not a Communist, so it is not a crime if you do not agree with the Party line."

"Well, I was opposed to the collectivization of agriculture. I considered it a most dangerous measure."

<sup>1</sup>The Gay-Pay-Oo was particularly ingenious in thinking out methods of torturing Russians whom it suspected of possessing stocks of gold or foreign currency, all of which was to be confiscated for the benefit of the state. Packing great numbers of people into a stiflingly hot room and forcing them to stand for hours without any sanitary facilities was one notorious method.

<sup>2</sup>Madame Tatiana Tchernavin, author of "Escape from the Soviets," was one of the few political prisoners who succeeded in escaping from the Soviet Union with her husband and only son.

<sup>3</sup>The "Party line" is an expression much in use in Russia to denote Communist party policies.

"Oh, that is different!" said the investigator, taking notes vigorously.

The scientist is doubtless branded in the Gay-Pay-Oo archives as a self-confessed saboteur of collective farming. But he obtained an immediate amelioration of his prison conditions.

My own reaction to the Industrial party trial was to go home and dash off a skit, for strictly private circulation. It depicted Anna Louise Strong, Louis Fischer, and other stalwart believers in the blessings of the Soviet regime at that time as engaged in a sinister plot with Jay Gould and Jim Fisk to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat and substitute a program of "Americanism," with the slogan: a bathtub in every home. As part of the scheme the Soviet cotton harvest was to be destroyed by dropping boll weevils from airplanes. It was nonsensical, of course, but not a bit more so than many of the sabotage reports in the Soviet press.

To relieve the strain of living under a tyranny so complete that no public criticism was possible, I resorted several times to this method of private satire as a kind of mental safety valve. Once the *Moscow Daily News*, the English-language propaganda organ which had just been started, published an article praising the work of a certain Chesnokov, a fisheries expert in Baku. I did not know Chesnokov at all, but felt a temptation to parody the style of the young Communist aggressively searching for a "bourgeois class enemy" to destroy. As my skit was a faithful and unexaggerated representation of the way in which the character of a scientist or intellectual could be destroyed by a young crusader, with or without the stimulus of a personal grudge, I append a brief résumé:

This article is a most harmful example of petty-bourgeois sentimentality. There is not the slightest trace of a Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist class approach to the problem of appraising Chesnokov and his work. Who is Chesnokov anyway? Is he of proletarian or poor peasant origin? If he isn't, what is the proof that he isn't sabotaging, under the guise of the left phrase? Most probably he is. And what was he doing in Baku during the civil war, when the British interventionists were there and the Mussavit counterrevolution<sup>1</sup> was raging? Let him answer that question if he can, or stand unmasked as an enemy of the proletariat.

<sup>1</sup> The Azerbaidjan Nationalist party which held power in Baku during the years of civil war bore the name of Mussavit.

I showed the skit to a Communist whom I credited with a sense of humor. He smiled a little sheepishly and said:

"I had no idea you knew Chesnokov."

"I don't; he is only a name in the newspaper to me."

"But he did have trouble with some foolish local Communists over just the points you mentioned. It was all very stupid, just a 'left excess'; they didn't understand Stalin's instructions properly."<sup>1</sup>

Subtlety and originality of thought are not characteristics of the totalitarian dictatorships, and it requires little perspicacity to imitate their style and to anticipate their ideas. If I were sufficiently cynical I think my Russian and German experiences would enable me to climb on the bandwagon of either a communist or a fascist revolution and perhaps to become the Dr. Goebels of the movement.

In the spring of 1931 Premier Molotov, whose stuttering was the physical reflection of an extremely dull brain (I cannot recall any Soviet public man whose speeches were such a consistently dreary waste), flung out a challenge and held out a hope to foreign journalists. There had been, the Premier declared, some quite false reports abroad about the employment of forced labor in Soviet timber camps. It would not be consistent with the dignity of the Soviet state to admit a foreign commission of inquiry. But foreign journalists had "freedom of movement." Let them go where they liked, and they would learn that all the stories of forced labor were malicious lies.

The *Monitor* telegraphed me to take up Molotov's offer, and Sonya and I were soon on the train for Karelia, a land of lakes and thick forests which is adjacent to Finland. There had been persistent reports of the employment of large numbers of deported kulaks and other "class enemies" as slave laborers in the Karelian timber camps.

It did not take us long to reach the conclusion that Comrade Premier Molotov had never heard of George Washington and the cherry tree and did not rate truthfulness among the major virtues. For, while the local authorities were quite willing to let us visit the ordinary timber camps, where local peasants were working and where no one had ever alleged that forced labor

<sup>1</sup> Stalin is an adept at a very old trick of absolute rulers: throwing the blame for his more unpopular measures on some luckless subordinates. It often happens that local Communist officials who have faithfully carried out instructions from the central authorities are tried and executed as scapegoats for the popular wrath.



prevailed, our "freedom of movement" stopped abruptly at the barbed-wire frontiers of the numerous Karelian concentration camps. We were refused point-blank when, on the basis of Molotov's assurances, we went to Kem and applied for permission to visit the Solovetzky Islands, off the coast of Karelia, one of the largest and most notorious of the Soviet places of exile and confinement. To the best of my knowledge no foreigner has ever been allowed to visit any concentration camp under Gay-Pay-Oo control as an independent observer.

So the best I could do for the *Monitor* on the forced-labor question was to report that, while I had actually seen no prisoners working under armed guard, I had not been permitted to get within eye range of any place where forced labor might reasonably be expected to exist. However, the circumstantial evidence which we collected during this short trip was quite impressive. At almost every railway siding between Petrozavodsk, the capital, and Kem we saw freight trains packed to suffocation with men, women, and children, penned up under worse conditions than would be inflicted on animals in civilized countries and guarded by armed sentries. Railway employees, less discreet than Soviet officials, told of the vast numbers of peasants from places as far away as Ukraina and Bokhara who had been sent to Karelia to work in the timber camps, in the construction of the canal between the Baltic and White seas and in the mineral phosphate fields of Hibinsk. The old *izvozchik* who drove us from the station at Petrozavodsk summed up the situation quite accurately when he said, "This isn't Karelia any more: It is *katorga*" (the Russian word for exile at hard labor).

The constant tension of the period lent special vividness to several little episodes which I shall never forget. One day when there had been some especially striking new atrocity (the announcement of a wholesale shooting, or of some measure of banishment or expropriation) I was in the home of Russian friends where the daughter played some *études* of Scriabin. It impressed me that civilized life could still go on in the midst of so much barbarism, and I remarked that perhaps Russians under Ivan the Terrible lived under similar conditions of constant strain and apprehension.

"Yes," said the girl, "we live under sixteenth century conditions, but with twentieth century nerves."

One of the few recreations in Moscow at this time was the opera. I especially enjoyed Moussorgsky's somber music drama "Khovanstchina," which is based on the tragedy of the Old Believers who burned themselves alive rather than conform to the demands of the state and accept the new ritual. One of the arias in the opera consists of a prayer that God will not permit Russia to perish, that a deliverer will be raised up. And I always felt a responsive thrill when, in the darkened opera house, a storm of applause, certainly not inspired entirely by the music, would break out whenever the aria was sung. It was the nearest thing to a public protest that I ever heard in Russia.

Shortly before we left Russia permanently, Sonya and I had a very interesting talk with a former revolutionary, an active participant in the 1905 uprising in Moscow, whom we met in a remote part of Russia on one of our trips. Russians, under the regime of the Gay-Pay-Oo, are apt to go to one of two extremes. Usually they are utterly terrified; but occasionally they are amazingly frank. This man seemed to be under a compelling urge to express to us ideas which he certainly could not have shared, with a minimum of safety, with any Soviet citizen.

"I can never forgive myself," he said, his voice quivering with passion, "for having given the best years of my life to a cause that turned into such a horrible tyranny after it prevailed. There are blunders that are worse than crimes."

Then we spoke of the possibility of a war with Japan, and he grimly observed:

"The Japanese are our only hope."

He certainly did not wish to see Japan ruling over Russian territory; but, like many other Russians then and now, he was convinced that only the shock of a large war could bring the existing regime crashing to its fall.

So my impressions of this era of Russia's first Five Year Plan<sup>1</sup> were overwhelmingly unfavorable. Its industrial achievements, such as they were, left me cold—they could easily have been matched and surpassed by the experiences of other countries in

<sup>1</sup> Nothing could have been more ironical than the contrast between the neatly tabulated figures handed out to foreign admirers of "planned economy" (which purported to show how many shoes, stockings, and moving picture theaters Russia would possess at the end of the Plan) and the chaotic disorganization as regards production and raw-material supply which one found in every factory which one visited.

periods of economic growth; and its outrages—the uncounted executions, the institution of virtual slavery for millions of people, the fraudulent sabotage trials, the espionage and terror, both ten times worse than during the first years which I had spent in Russia, the consequent degradation of human personality—filled me with growing disgust and revulsion. I became increasingly anxious to leave Russia, to put aside the euphemisms and restraints of censorship and write exactly what I thought of the events and processes which I had witnessed.

I could at any time have gained the rather cheap publicity of being expelled from the Soviet Union by simply writing a few articles in the vein of the present chapter. But for two reasons I preferred not to leave Russia except of my own free will. There is always a natural suspicion that a correspondent who has been expelled from a country may be prone to exaggeration from a sense of personal grievance. I wished to avoid any such suggestion in connection with anything which I might write after departing from Moscow. Moreover, I had accumulated a mass of material for my history of the Revolution. This I certainly could not take with me if I were leaving under an order of expulsion. So I decided that I and not the Gay-Pay-Oo would decide the time of my going.

During 1933 and 1934 I was off the rolls of active journalism. I had obtained leave of absence from the *Monitor* in order to set about the actual writing of my long-planned history, with the timely aid of a Guggenheim fellowship which had been granted to me. Curiously enough, it was during this interval of absence from the journalistic field that I obtained what I consider my biggest “story” in Russia, the story of the gigantic, state-organized, hushed-up famine of 1932-1933.

Returning to Moscow from a trip to America in the spring of 1933, I heard on every hand reports that something even worse than the previous harrying of the kulaks was going on in the villages. There were rumors of mass starvation, especially in the normally rich farming regions of Ukraine and the North Caucasus. The impression that something very abnormal was taking place in the villages was strengthened by the fact that the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs had introduced a new rule forbidding journalists to travel in Russia without special permission—a permission which was never granted when Ukraine and the North Caucasus

were mentioned as destinations. The official explanation of this ruling would have deserved an international mendacity prize. It was that the presence of foreign correspondents would disturb the harvesting operations. Half a dozen foreign journalists seriously affecting the course of farm labor in an area which Soviet orators liked to describe as including one-sixth of the surface of the globe!

I decided to abandon history long enough to find out what had happened in the barred areas. The ban on journalistic travel was suggestively lifted after the new harvest had been gathered in—after there had been an opportunity to bury the corpses and to remove outward signs of the famine. The first correspondent who received permission to travel was a consistent apologist for every case of Soviet *Schrecklichkeit*, on the argument, somewhat boring through frequent repetition, that one couldn't make an omelet without breaking eggs. The last to be allowed to leave Moscow was Ralph Barnes, of the *New York Herald Tribune*, whose courageous, honest reporting in the face of the harassments and disabilities of censorship should have won him a Pulitzer Prize, or some other mark of distinction. Sonya and I were permitted to go after the hero of the omelet and eggs but before Barnes—an indication that we enjoyed about a medium rating with the Gay-Pay-Oo at that time.

We planned our trip, of some three weeks, with some care. With a view to obtaining an all-around picture of what had happened in southern and southeastern Russia, we decided to divide our time among three districts, each separated from the others by hundreds of miles: one in the North Caucasus, two in Ukraina. Our first destination was a German agricultural concession (soon afterwards terminated), located near the town of Kropotkin, in the North Caucasus.

The concession itself was an object lesson in the importance of good management in farming. It was an oasis of order and plenty in a desert of surrounding unkempt neglected fields. The manager of the concession, a stiff East Prussian who unbent conspicuously if one addressed him as Herr Doktor (he had received this title from some agricultural academy) took grim delight in pointing out the contrast between his own straight, flourishing, well tended rows of sunflower plants and the straggling, weedy products of the neighboring state farm. "Mein ist nicht drei Meter sauber, mein ist ganz sauber," he declared as he showed how the state farm, for

appearance' sake, had weeded its fields only for a distance of three meters from the road.

By staying at the concession we were able to walk out into the neighboring villages without having official guides imposed on us. This had been one of the richest and most smiling agricultural regions in Russia. Now it looked as if its fields had been ravaged by a hostile army. There was an amazing lack of domestic animals; one saw none of the dogs that had formerly rushed out barking when we entered Cossack villages. In the first house which we entered at random we found that seven members of the family had died of hunger. Three had survived. We did not meet any peasant who did not tell us of the loss of relatives or friends. The president of the Soviet in one of the largest villages which we visited, Kazanskaya, admitted that 850 people had died out of a population of 8,000 during the last year. He also showed us a set of local mortality statistics indicating how the curve of death had mounted steeply as the last reserves of grain were consumed toward spring and the supply of cats, dogs, and weeds which were eaten as food substitutes also began to run short. There had been 21 deaths in January, 34 in February, 79 in March, and 155 in April. I showed these figures to a Labor peer who could see nothing but sweetness and light in the Soviet Union. He thought hard for a moment and then conceived the following brilliant exercise in apologetics:

"Oh, of course. It's just the same in England, you know, more people dying in winter than in summer."

From the Kuban we went to Poltava, where Peter the Great had won his decisive victory over Charles XII of Sweden. Poltava had acquired a particularly bad reputation; more than once we had heard in Moscow of the carts that moved through the streets in the early morning, picking up dead bodies. The authorities had evidently been warned of our coming and were on the alert to give us as much official chaperonage as possible.

But as soon as we went out of the town into the surrounding villages the peasants told us precisely the same stories as in the North Caucasus. Indeed the possibilities of lying about the famine visibly diminished as one approached the regions where it had occurred. In Moscow it was easy for glib officials to deny to credulous foreigners that there had been any starvation. In Poltava famine could not be denied, although its extent was minimized.

By the time one was in the village, with its dusty lanes between the thatched-roof log cabins, even the staunchest Communist was helpless against the unanimous testimony of the peasants. While we were visiting a village called Zhuke, near Poltava, two local officials were carefully steering us into the homes of the petty officials of the local collective farm. Suddenly we decided to go into a house at random. We found a girl of fourteen huddled up on the bench which ran around the wall of the house. Had she a father? Yes, he was at work in the fields. A mother? No, her mother and her four brothers and sisters had died during the last winter and spring. And her father, as we found, was still an *edinolichnik*, a peasant working his own land. Marvelous fatalistic stubbornness of a man who would see almost his whole family starve to death and still refuse to accept the new servitude of the collective farm!

We slipped into Belaya Tserkov, a small town with a considerable Jewish population, without attracting official attention, and immediately started out on what we had found to be the most fruitful method of investigation: cross-country walking. Everywhere the peasants, after telling of their own misfortunes, added: "But you must go to Cherkass if you want to see the famine at its worst." We reached this village of death on a sunny autumn afternoon. A zealous Communist had removed the ikon of Christ which had formerly been placed on the road at the entrance to the village. But the crown of thorns, appropriately enough, remained. One house after another was deserted, the windows gaping and open, the gardens and little fields choked with weeds. The secretary of the local soviet, a young Communist named Fishenko, told us that over 600 of the village's two thousand inhabitants had perished. Of the six children who had been born during the year, one had survived.

No one will ever know with certainty how many lives were lost in this famine, which affected an area with a population of some fifty million inhabitants. Nowhere did we find a death rate of less than 10 per cent; in Cherkass the figure was about 30 per cent. The moderate figure of 10 per cent gives a total of five million deaths. Subtract a million and a quarter that would have occurred in any event, and there remain almost four million victims of Stalin's determination to impose on the peasants the new serfdom of the collective farm. An interesting bit of corroborative evidence of the severe decline of population in 1933

was the refusal of the Soviet authorities to publish the first figures of a census that was taken several years later. Even after more acceptable figures had been supplied, Poltava Province suggestively revealed a decline of 15 per cent in population.

Of the Government's responsibility for the famine, for the bloated stomachs, the cracking bones, the lingering and painful deaths of these peasants there can be, I think, no serious question. In the first place, it had paralyzed the peasants' will to produce by year after year of arbitrary requisitions of their produce and also by the forcible introduction of a new and very unpopular system of farming. The peasants never had a chance to vote for or against collective farming. My own impression that the vast majority of them detested the system finds confirmation, I think, in the fact that less than 2 per cent of the peasants joined collective farms while this was a matter of voluntary choice, up to 1929.

Even after the successive poor harvests of 1931 and 1932 the peasants could have lived if there had not been repeated supplementary requisitions taking away their last reserves of grain and vegetables. The Government's idea was that they had not worked hard enough and they were to be punished by starvation. We heard more than once, especially in the North Caucasus, of village soviet presidents who were shot because they refused to carry out the ruthless requisitioning orders of the central authorities. One's faith in the decency of the average human being, often severely shaken under totalitarian regimes, is reawakened by the thought of these humble and unknown martyrs.

The famine was an instrument of national policy. It "taught the peasants a lesson," in the best style of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan. Yet the peasant struggle against collective farming is apparently not ended. A Soviet decree of 1939 announced various pains and penalties for peasants who were converting collective farm land to their own use and moving out of villages to settle on homesteads—a proof that the peasants are still not willing to become laborers for the state so long as there are any loopholes through which they can still enjoy rights of individual property. No doubt their great-grandfathers, serfs of the Tsar and the landlords, also sabotaged the system in indirect ways even when open resistance was impossible.

The famine was the final climactic chapter in my Russian education. I went to Russia believing that the Soviet system might

represent the most hopeful answer to the problems raised by the World War and the subsequent economic crisis. I left convinced that the absolutist Soviet state (and surely absolutism could find no more impressive expression than the dooming of millions of people to death by famine) is a power of darkness and of evil with few parallels in history. I went to Russia prepared to write off thousands of executions for the sake of the supposedly noble ideals of the Revolution. When I left Russia, with the simple, tragic, epic peasant stories of the famine fresh in my consciousness, I would not, as a statesman, have taken the responsibility of killing even one of the uncounted child victims of the Soviet Herod-state. For murder is a habit, even more with states than with individuals, and the idea of doing a little evil that good may come of it invariably ends in doing a great deal of evil with an increasingly dubious prospect of any good whatever at the end of the process.

My reaction to the Soviet Union, although critical, was by no means predominantly negative. Under the challenge of Soviet collectivism I rediscovered and cherished with tenfold conviction my instinctive individualist faith. Many of the things that were most proscribed, despised, and ridiculed by the Communists seemed to me the highest values of civilization. Among these I would especially note civil and personal liberties: the right of the artist and thinker to create, free from censorship, the right of the individual to lead his own life free from mass pressure; the capacity for open-mindedness, for doubt, for skepticism, the virtues of pity and tolerance, the quality, which old Aeschylus recognized as godlike, of defying even the highest power in the name of one's own conception of right. I was a great deal surer of the validity of these values after twelve years in Russia than I might have been if I had lived in a country where they were more or less taken for granted.



## CHAPTER EIGHT: *The Red and the Brown*

*Sonya, Elizabeth, and I* left the Soviet Union permanently in March, 1934, a few months after the completion of our trip in the Soviet famine areas. About half of the history still had to be written, and I also wished to write an uninhibited book about contemporary Russia. After hesitating between Berlin and Prague we chose the German capital, where we had more friends and were familiar with the language. Here we were soon comfortably settled as paying guests in the capacious villa of a professor in a pleasant suburban section, within easy reach of the forest paths and lakes of the Grunewald; and my typewriter was clicking from morning until evening (I have always typed myself everything that I have published) as the two books assumed concrete form.

To the book on my last five years in the Soviet Union I gave the title "Russia's Iron Age." This was a badly needed and overdue corrective of my "Soviet Russia." Conditions had changed vastly since the relatively mild first years of my Russian stay, on the basis of which I had prepared my first book; and, as I point out in my last chapter, my personal attitude had correspondingly altered. Having lived in the Soviet Union throughout this period, I had an abundance of material. The book was prepared under pressure of time; with more leisure the style might have been smoother in places, and the arrangement of the facts could have been improved.

In the main, however, I was satisfied with "Russia's Iron Age." It was a profound psychological relief to set down my impressions of the Soviet Union without even the indirect pressure of know-

ing that my return visa depended on not expressing critical views too sharply and unambiguously; for I knew in advance that I could never return to the Soviet Union if I told the entire, undiluted truth about such subjects as the famine, forced labor, the fraudulent sabotage trials, the methods of the Gay-Pay-Oo. I had seen too many journalistic colleagues—Isaac Don Levine of the Hearst press, Paul Scheffer of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, Mackenzie of the *Chicago Daily News*, to mention only a few—placed on the Soviet journalistic blacklist for much smaller offenses: for a single inadvertent article or speech, for a “generally unfavorable mental attitude.” So I was neither surprised nor disconcerted when Soviet officials went out of their way to tell my successor, Demaree Bess, that I should never be allowed to cross the Soviet frontier again.

Among the chapters of the book my personal favorite was the one called *Old Russia in New Masks*. Here I tried to communicate to my readers some of the wisdom of that greatest of Russian historians, Kluchevsky, whose magnificent description of Russia’s development I had read with never failing fascination in my little study on the Borisoglebsky Pereulok. Kluchevsky’s account, at once eloquent, scholarly and deeply human, of the terrific weight which the Muscovite state imposed on the bodies of the Russian people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made me see the predecessors of the contemporary starving peasants, the kulaks packed in their freight-car prisons, the broken and terrorized intelligentsia. And, as a result of the last trip which Sonya and I had made in southern Russia, I was able to give more specific facts and details of the famine than I have seen in any other published work. (A good deal of material on this subject collected by one of the foreign agricultural attachés in Moscow, who enjoyed special facilities for traveling, was incorporated in his private reports.)

“Russia’s Iron Age” had a good press in America and England. Some reviewers whose other writings had indicated Soviet sympathies gave a very fair hearing to my account. There was vituperation, of course, from “friends of the Soviet Union” whose faith was proof against any profane reasoning, but I sustained with equanimity harsh words and the rather juvenile demonstrations of boycotting Sonya and myself in which some personal acquaintances among them indulged. I knew the basic facts of the period which I had described, and most of my critics furnished

pretty convincing evidence that they did not. As for those who recognized the accuracy of the picture of universal terror and misery and yet upheld the Soviet system as the hope of humanity, there was little common ground for discussion: the difference in scales of values was too great.

The history was an undertaking of quite different character from "Russia's Iron Age." The latter was frankly, to some extent, argumentative and polemical, although Sonya and I checked over the manuscript very carefully to make sure that the exuberance of writing without a censor, visible or invisible, had not led to exaggeration or factual distortion. Nothing went into the book which we did not know either from personal observation or from thoroughly reliable sources; and much of its documentation was furnished by Soviet books, magazines, and newspapers; but, after more than eleven years in Russia, I had certain subjective reactions which I wished to set forth.

In the case of the history, on the other hand, I attempted to be as impersonal as possible. I felt an especially great responsibility for factual accuracy because the second volume, which dealt with the little known period of intervention and the experience of war communism, broke new ground, at least for non-Russian readers. I always chose understatement when the alternative was exaggeration, with the result that some of the melodrama, of the savage frenzy of the Revolution was doubtless missed. On the other hand, I left few openings for criticism of the objectivity and reliability of the narrative. I felt more elation when the two stout volumes of the history were delivered to me in Tokyo in the following year than on the publication of any other book: the history was definitely my *magnum opus*.

Not that I had been able, even with Sonya's faithful and untiring help, to explore the entire panorama of the revolution and civil war. This would have required a corps of trained historians, and no doubt certain secrets are still jealously guarded in the Communist party archives.

However, I enjoyed an advantage which would be denied to a student of history commencing work in Moscow at the present time. During our first years in Moscow there was no such deliberate, systematic falsification of the history of the Revolution as occurred later in the interest of Stalin's personal glorification. (Stalin set an excellent example in this field, which his sycophants

were quick to follow: In one passage of his collected works he observes, with historical accuracy, that the revolutionary coup in Petrograd was very largely due to the initiative of Trotzky. In another passage reproducing a speech which he delivered at a later date, he declares that Trotzky had played "no special role" at this time.) The travesties of history which are now offered to Soviet readers represent the Revolution as the work of Lenin and Stalin, in the face of active treason and sabotage on the part of Trotzky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, and other leading figures of 1917.

During our stay in Moscow we were able to obtain Trotzky's own works, Shlyapnikov's exposure of Stalin's very un-Leninist tactics in the first weeks of the Revolution and the memoirs of Sukhanov, active participant in the first Petrograd Soviet, on whom Stalin, as he tells us, produced the impression of "a blank spot." That judgment, highly inopportune in the light of Stalin's rise to absolute power, may well have had much to do with Sukhanov's subsequent arrest and conviction in one of the numerous dubious plot cases.

While I was working extremely hard, I vastly enjoyed this period in Berlin. It was a great satisfaction to reduce the huge shapeless mass of notes and marked passages in books to some kind of order in the chapters of my history. It was a relaxation to feel free of responsibility for reporting the day's news. After the almost incredible cramping and crowding of Moscow it was a relief to wander among the spacious villas and gardens of suburban Berlin. The environs of the city, with their woods and lakes, were a constant attraction for an enthusiastic walker, and once a week I was off for an all-day hike: the best means of avoiding staleness in trying to reconstruct what had happened in Turkestan during the civil war or why Lenin was finally induced to approve the New Economic Policy.

Sonya and I took a longer vacation in Switzerland—my first visit to this mountain paradise; and we tramped about Adelboden, Kandersteg, and other places in the Bernese Oberland. Then we visited Prague, the city of so many unhappy memories during the last years. We found it one of the most fascinating medieval cities in Europe, with its mixture of German and Czech memorials. I went there to gather supplementary material for my history. There we met Russian émigrés of various political shades: Victor

Chernov, a prominent Socialist Revolutionary; Countess Panina, one of Russia's pioneer social workers; Kharlamov, a dignified old Cossack who had once been president of the Don Krug, or local council of one of the chief Cossack regions. I was impressed in Prague, as later in Shanghai and Paris, by the infinitely greater individuality that distinguished these harassed, poverty-stricken fugitives from the Russians who had been cast in the Soviet mold. One charming old lady, a former aristocrat, whom we met in Prague, was in charge of a museum of old Russian ikons in the Byzantine style. She insisted very seriously that this was a means of combating the Communist International. I felt that this was an amusing opposite number, in propaganda, to the Soviet efforts to represent every new factory as a "reply" to some foreign dignitary—to the Pope, for instance, or to Foreign Minister Austen Chamberlain of Great Britain.

Sonya made a start in Berlin with the study of Japanese, while Elizabeth, now seven years old, began to go to the American School. At first it was a difficult experience for her—she spoke English with a pronounced Russian accent, and children are as merciless as totalitarian dictators to those who deviate from conformity; but she finally became quite attached to some of the teachers. She also enjoyed Berlin more as she learned more German. By the time we left she spoke the language fluently and idiomatically enough to excite my envy and my regret for a childhood that had given me no opportunity to learn foreign languages in an easy and natural way.

With my concentration on the history, I could not study Germany as I had studied Russia; but I knew the country fairly well from many previous visits. I read the newspapers and some of the new Nazi confessions of faith. Our friends included several foreign correspondents, notably Emlyn Williams of the *Monitor*, John Elliott of the *New York Herald Tribune*, and H. R. Knickerbocker, whom we had known in Moscow. "Knick" was leading the breathless life of the high-powered Hearst roving correspondent, flying to Vienna to report the abortive Nazi revolt which led to the murder of Dollfuss, flying back to Berlin when Hindenburg's death placed Germany again in the center of the world's attention.

I gained a pretty accurate, if superficial, impression of the institutions and psychology of the Third Reich in this early phase of its development. Naturally comparison with Russia came up

at every turn. In contrast to my early attitude toward the Soviet Union, I approached Nazi Germany with distinctly unfavorable prepossessions. I disliked practically everything I knew about Hitler's creed: his exaltation of war, his contempt for the individual, his fanatical racialism, his elevation of instinct and emotion above reason.

Moreover, I was sufficiently familiar with Germany under the Weimar Republic to realize how much lying slander there was in the Nazi denunciations of the fallen regime. The Republic, of course, had its own faults, among which flabbiness in dealing with internal enemies was the most conspicuous;<sup>1</sup> and a multiplicity of parties which was exaggerated by a system of proportional representation made the parliamentary system almost unworkable in times of acute economic stress and strain. But Germany under the Republic was a highly civilized country. Important social reforms were achieved. There was vitality in music, art, and the theater. The regional particularism which was one of the pleasantest features of pre-Nazi Germany enjoyed full play. An industrial town would usually have the Social Democratic administration which most of its inhabitants desired. A conservative peasant country like Bavaria would have its Catholic government. There was one year (1928, I think) when Germany did not have a single execution. It seemed to me a remarkable achievement, and one that deserved much more recognition than it received, for almost seventy million people to live together without finding it necessary to take a single life.

The Nazis had already made this Germany look like a very distant and far-away land.

My first contact with Germany under Hitler was in the spring of 1933, on a short visit to Berlin before returning to Russia. All the railway stations and other public places swarmed with brown uniforms, and I had never noticed so many unpleasant faces, hard, coarse, and brutalized, in Germany before. In Moscow I found another bad omen of the quality of the new regime: Most of the German correspondents there compared favorably with correspondents of any nationality in their knowledge of Russian language and history, their understanding of Soviet conditions, their gen-

<sup>1</sup> What a terrible responsibility rests on the official who did not deport Hitler to his native Austria after he had served his term of imprisonment for the Munich "Putsch"!

eral culture and intelligence; but the one among them who would have received a conspicuously low mark if he had been subjected to a Binet-Simon intelligence test was the sole enthusiastic Nazi.

It was with some curiosity that I analyzed my prospective reactions before quitting Moscow for Berlin. Would the new regime in Germany prove so revolting that I would take a more favorable view of the Soviets in retrospect? Or would my last grim impressions of deliberately starved Ukrainian and Cossack villages lead me to look with indulgence on a regime that boasted of having stamped out Communism?

Both these questions were to be answered in the negative. Gay-Pay-Oo terrorism did not seem a bit less ugly when I found that the Gestapo, the Nazi secret police organization that imitated it, was using very similar methods; and Hitler's claim to be the savior of Germany from Bolshevism (how amusing it looks in the light of the recent Soviet-German pact!) left me cold for two reasons: In the first place, it was fraudulent. Since 1923 there had been no serious Communist threat to the stability of the Republic. The Social Democratic party and the trade unions, which Hitler smashed just as ruthlessly as he destroyed the Communists, were the best bulwark against Bolshevism in Germany. Secondly, the pretended remedy was far too similar to the disease.

The likenesses between the two regimes began to crowd in on me as soon as I reached Berlin. On all the billboards was an advertisement of a competition in skill for young German workers. It was no mere prosaic suggestion, such as one might see in England or America to Hans, Fritz, and Ernst that they might earn a few more marks a week if they became more skilled in their trades: it was a glowing outburst about the new day that had dawned for Germany, about the duty of every young German to work hard for the Fatherland; and it was irresistibly reminiscent of appeals to the Communist youth in Russia to "master technique" for the greater glory of the Soviet state and the world revolution.

A little later I was present at a club gathering of some German professors and intellectuals. They were obviously mostly old friends, congenial in their views. Talk flowed freely; there was even some mention of the dangerous subject of internal politics. Then one suddenly sensed a chill creeping over the gathering. The talk dwindled to a minimum. The cause of the change was a young man who had just entered with a Hakenkreuz conspicuously

displayed in his buttonhole. He was a member of the club who had ostentatiously gone over to the new ruling group. Everyone saw in him a potential spy. It was all a perfect reproduction of the behavior pattern of a group of Russian middle-aged educated men when a Communist suddenly appeared in their midst.

Hatred and envy, two of the strongest and also most sterile human passions, were the mainsprings of both the Russian and the German revolutions. When I heard some Nazi demagogue blaming the Jews for all Germany's ills or sneering at the intellectuals, to the delight of the half-educated party rank and file, I recognized a blood brother of the Soviet Communist agitator, glibly attributing food shortage and other difficulties to kulaks, saboteurs, Trozkyists, the Pope, or any other convenient scapegoat.

A young Nazi scientist named Willi Menzel leaped into notoriety by enunciating the brilliant idea that there are two kinds of physics, German physics and Jewish physics. I never had the pleasure of making Willi's acquaintance. But I had known his like quite often in Russia, where it was a familiar trick of the incompetent writer, architect, musician, or scientist to claim pure proletarian quality for his own efforts, denouncing those of his rivals as "bourgeois." The new books which one could see in Berlin, given over to nonsensical dissertations on "racial" art, literature, and philosophy, were the precise intellectual equivalent of the innumerable Soviet books on the "class" interpretation of everything from music to mathematics. An amusing manifestation of this kind was the organization of a group of physicians under the name "Leninism in Medicine." A foreign Communist sympathizer who had not lost his sense of humor remarked to me with a laugh about these "Leninist" physicians:

"I suppose a typical maxim of Leninism in medicine would be: If the patient suffers from an ache in his toe, cut off his leg. If there's any doubt about it, cut off both."

Russia's Leninist healers would have found professional compeers in Nazi physicians who committed themselves to employing old German herbs as sovereign remedies.

On the political side the parallelism between the two systems was so complete that one felt no change of atmosphere in Berlin after Moscow. There was a current story, incidentally, that officials in the Soviet Embassy in Berlin, after Hitler's regime—with its concentration camps, arrests, and complete suppression of public



criticism—had been established, began to say to one another: “We feel more and more at home.”

In Germany, just as in Russia, I found a ruling party, tolerating no other political organization. The Germans, in their methodical way, had duly registered this fact in a law of July 14, 1933, the first paragraph of which reads:

There is only one political party in Germany, and that is the National Socialist German Workers' Party.

The Soviet Constitution is less specific: it does not formally prohibit the existence of non-Communist parties; but Lenin summed up Soviet administrative practice very accurately when he declared that there might be any number of parties in Soviet Russia, provided that the Communist party was in power and all the other parties were in prison. There has been no change whatever in this situation, it should be noted, since the promulgation of the new Soviet Constitution in 1937.

Hitler's position in Germany, I found, was the precise duplicate of Stalin's in Russia: that of an absolute dictator. (What a pathetic spectacle of intellectual deterioration is the solemn disputing by the Webbs in their “Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?”—by all odds one of the worst and most misleading books written about the Soviet Union—of Stalin's status as a dictator!) Although the National Socialist in Germany, like the Communist in Russia, enjoyed a privileged status in relation to his fellow citizens, he had no voice in determining the course of public affairs. Any individual or group in either party suspected of disagreement with the inspired “leader” was subjected to prompt and ruthless disciplinary measures, ranging from expulsion and political oblivion to execution.

Hitler and Stalin have both been obliged to maintain their ascendancy by wholesale killings of their old comrades. I was in Berlin during the famous “purge” of June 30, when scores or hundreds (no one knows the exact figure) of recalcitrant Nazis were suddenly rounded up and slaughtered in the best traditions of Scarface Al Capone—or of Stalin; and I sensed immediately the familiar Moscow atmosphere of furtive terror, of wild rumors and speculation. Just as people of differing views and attachments were often included in one batch of executions in Russia, so the victims of June 30 represented rather a mixed bag.

Decent intelligent Germans breathed a sigh of heartfelt satisfaction when they saw on the list of executions the names of Roehm, Heines, and other notorious terrorists and homosexuals: they were considered a decidedly good riddance; but the killings had also included such prominent conservatives as General von Schleicher and his wife, several prominent Catholics and, naturally, a few Jews. Its real significance was not, as some Germans and foreigners thought at the time, the establishment of the domination of the Reichswehr and the conservative nationalist elements in the Nazi party. It was rather the consolidation of Hitler's personal dictatorship. Because he was able by this drastic method to rid himself of some of the extremists who had helped him in his rise to power he would be able, several years later, to dismiss conservative generals and financiers.

The single dictatorial party, itself subject to the will of a supposedly infallible leader, was only part of the essential similarity between Communist and Nazi methods of government. Both employed a combination of two devices which are utterly detestable to an individualist, but are unfortunately very effective: unlimited propaganda plus unlimited terrorism. In Germany I found a perfect imitation of the Soviet practice of utilizing the press, the schools, the theater, the radio, every agency of entertainment and instruction, as one huge ballyhoo agency for the existing regime. Open criticism was impossible; private criticism, highly dangerous.

Dissidents were reduced to telling imaginary sarcastic stories (I have sometimes heard from Germans the same "anecdotes" as from Russians, although in general the Germans displayed less of the sardonic imagination required for this kind of satire than the Russians) and to chuckling over suggestive misprints in the newspapers. One such misprint while I was in Germany was in connection with a birthday message which President von Hindenburg had sent to Hitler, expressing hope for the long preservation of a life which had been so useful to the Fatherland. It appeared in one newspaper with a question mark instead of the customary exclamation point after German felicitations. It reminded me of the ripple of laughter which followed the appearance, in the *Moscow Daily News*, of the headline, "Appalling Conditions of Forced Labor in Siberia," followed a day or two later by a shamefaced explanation that Liberia had been meant.

Over and above the propaganda was the terror. I felt a curious

sense of reminiscence when I saw the hard features of the typical S.S. man, one of the Nazi "elite." "Where have I seen such faces before?" I thought. It was not necessary to search very far in my memory. The spiritual blood brothers of the S.S. and the Gestapo officials (these two groups were closely interwoven) were the directors of the Gay-Pay-Oo, whose pictures periodically appeared in *Izvestia* and *Pravda* as "wielders of the merciless sword of the proletariat."

However different in social and educational background may have been the ex-officer who was likely to be found in the Gestapo and the Odessa Jew who figured prominently in the Gay-Pay-Oo, the exercise of absolute power had the same corrupting and brutalizing effect, and produced the same type of character. The technique of terrorism was strikingly similar in the two countries. I once noted down four characteristic administrative methods which the Nazis had learned or could have learned from the Russian Communists. These were:

(1) Executions without open trial and sentencing to concentration camps of "counterrevolutionaries." This term is applied to anyone who is justly or unjustly suspected of harboring critical thoughts about the regime.

(2) Treatment of the wife and children of any political suspect as hostages to be imprisoned or maltreated if he flees from the country or falls into disfavor for some other reason. This barbarous practice was formally written into the Soviet penal code in 1934.

(3) Making it a grave offense for a citizen ("subject" or "slave" would be a much more accurate descriptive term) to leave the country without official permission.

(4) Finding imaginary scapegoats for the blunders of government. The sabotage trials in the Soviet Union, in one of which two dead men were indicted for treasonable activities allegedly committed long after their deaths were admirable dress rehearsals for the Reichstag Fire trial.

This synthesis of propaganda and terrorism has created a degradation of the human spirit under both dictatorships which must be seen to be fully appreciated. One of my most disgusted moments in the Soviet Union was when I sat in the press gallery of the Kremlin palace where a congress of Soviets was in progress, shortly after returning from a trip to the famine regions of Ukraina and the North Caucasus, and heard the Soviet President Kalinin

impudently assert that there had been no famine. That Kalinin should lie was natural; it was what one had learned to expect from Soviet officials, high and low. But it was depressing for one's faith in human character and intelligence to see that not one delegate from Ukraina or the North Caucasus dared to contradict or protest.

One sensed the same spirit at National Socialist party congresses or Reichstag sessions. If Hitler had become intoxicated or lost possession of his faculties and uttered the most contradictory nonsense, he would still have received the same raucous cheers from the assembled robots in uniform.

To be sure there is a brighter aspect of this problem of human character under dictatorship. As I learned during my last trip in Russia, there were soviet presidents who would rather be shot themselves than starve the peasants in their districts. There are Germans who at great personal risk have helped the Jews and the other victims of the Nazi oppression. When I read Nora Waln's vivid, moving, and highly realistic picture of the Third Reich, "Reaching for the Stars," I could see the spiritual kin of our old friends among the Russian intelligentsia in the Germans, also mostly of the educated class, who still maintained their moral integrity under the terrible pressure of the dictatorship. I should like to shake hands with the professor who was proud because his son was in prison for having said that a victorious Germany would have imposed a worse peace than that of Versailles. But this genuine elite in both countries can only make its influence felt when there is a crash of one or both of these Satanic systems.

The sycophantic adulation which is the daily fare of these two proletarian dictators, Stalin the Georgian shoemaker's son and Hitler the formerly unemployed house painter, far exceeds anything offered to their Imperial predecessors. I recall the quiet British humor with which the *Times*, of London, during my stay in Berlin reported a "German Christian" bishop as saying that the minor St. Bartholomew's massacre of June 30 had made clear to everyone what had always been obvious to him, the Bishop; namely, the unique greatness of the Führer. The continual attribution of all conceivable virtue and wisdom, in every field, to the leader was a conspicuous common feature of the two systems. I cannot forbear quoting a peculiarly lush specimen of the adulation which is constantly lavished on Stalin. A "proletarian" writer named

Avdyenko, who is probably not in the literary tradition of Turgenev and Tolstoy, delivered himself as follows:

Centuries shall elapse and the Communist generations of the future will deem us the happiest of all mortals who have inhabited this planet throughout the ages, because we have seen Stalin the leader-genius, Stalin the sage, the smiling, the kindly, the supremely simple. When I met Stalin, even at a distance, I throbbed with his forcefulness, his magnetism and his greatness. I wanted to sing, to shriek, to howl from happiness and exaltation.

Another familiar feature in Germany, in the light of my Russian experience, was the number of young men in responsible positions. And it would be equally true of both countries to say that the new regimes enjoyed most wholehearted support from the people under thirty. This must be recognized as a fact, profoundly discouraging as it is for anyone who hopes for a peaceful liquidation of both forms of tyranny. It is an illusion, I am afraid, to believe that youth is especially fond of liberty. Appreciation of freedom is more apt to come with maturity.

What youth appreciates more than liberty is action, of which the dictatorships certainly gave it plenty, self-assertion, energetic leadership. Moreover, the younger people in both countries have been far more exposed to the workings of the state propaganda machine. In Russia a whole generation has grown up knowing nothing but the Soviet system. The Nazi regime in Germany was much younger; but during my stay in Berlin I had many opportunities to see that it was losing no time in putting the youth into uniform, in making it march in step, work in step, and, so far as possible, think in step.

Religious persecution was no novelty in Germany after Russia, although it was and still is much milder in the Third Reich than it is in the Soviet Union. There are some towns in Russia where all the churches have been closed, and only a handful of Moscow's hundreds of churches are still devoted to religious uses. There are no accurate statistics of the numbers of Orthodox priests, rabbis, Roman Catholic priests and ministers of evangelical sects who have been executed and banished under the Soviets; but it is certainly enormously greater than the number of priests and ministers who have been imprisoned in Germany.

Both regimes are fundamentally antireligious. They both deny

to the individual the right of moral judgment. But communism is intent on destroying all forms of religion. The attempts of some Orthodox prelates with an eye to self-preservation to form a sort of Soviet state church in 1922 and 1923 met with no success. National Socialism, on the other hand, is willing to tolerate religious ritual and practice—so long as the moral obligations of Christianity are not taken seriously enough to lead to criticism of the unchristian acts of the regime. So, while any priest in Russia is a likely candidate for arrest, only the exceptional priest or minister who is prepared to court persecution by expressing forbidden ideas is apt to be molested in Germany.

Our home in Berlin was not far from the church of Dr. Martin Niemoeller, outstanding figure in the Confessional movement of the Evangelical Church which refused to accept Nazi dictation in matters of conscience. Niemoeller has now been a prisoner of the Gestapo for years. At that time his church was always crowded; his forthright sermons were the nearest thing to public expression of free thought that one could hear in Germany. Niemoeller was an unusual personality; he had been commander of a submarine during the World War, and he was entirely fearless. Emlyn Williams, the *Monitor* correspondent in Berlin, who possessed a typically Welsh background of biblical knowledge, was much in demand among his less instructed colleagues for identification of the texts which Niemoeller used and for explanations of their significance.

Cardinal Faulhaber in Munich also delivered some courageous addresses. He aroused the special wrath of the Nazi racial fanatics by pointing out the contrast between the Jewish contribution to religion and the barbarism of the primitive Germans, which it was a Nazi article of faith to extol and also, unfortunately, to imitate.

The list of similarities between the dictatorship of the Hammer and Sickle and that of the Hakenkreuz also extended to the more constructive aspects of the two regimes. The work of the German *Kraft durch Freude* organization in providing vacation trips, outings, excursions, and entertainments for workers was very similar to that of the Soviet trade unions.

Both National Socialists and Communists could point to an increase of industrial production and to virtual elimination of unemployment. (This was not yet true of Germany when I was there in 1934; but in recent years a positive shortage of labor has

appeared in the Third Reich.) Had the abolition of unemployment meant, as Communist and Nazi propagandists like to represent, that everyone in Russia and Germany has work at normal wages the social achievement would be a mighty one, worthy to weigh heavily in the balance against the defects of the new regimes.

But this is far from being the case. Russia's claim to have "abolished unemployment" is a cynical mockery so long as millions of prisoners and exiles are working as serfs or semi-serfs under living conditions far worse than those of the poorest unemployed in other countries. Nor has there been the slightest tendency among the unemployed in other countries to migrate to Russia. This is the most convincing proof of my own belief, based on personal observation up to 1934, supplemented by periodic check-ups on Soviet wages and prices since leaving Russia, that the great majority of the Soviet workers are living on a lower standard, as regards food, clothing, and housing, than that of the American and British unemployed.

The German boast of eliminating unemployment is also subject to several discounts. One must bear in mind the artificial nature of unemployment reduction through the reintroduction of military service and the establishment of compulsory labor service. And hundreds of thousands of Jews have been barred from all occupations and pauperized. But the fundamental flaw in the Nazi scheme of providing work for all is that it depends on a terrific expansion of armaments which it is beyond the capacity of the country to carry on indefinitely. It must, therefore, end either in war, with casualties and deprivations far exceeding the sufferings of unemployment, or in a new crisis in the event of some kind of armament limitation.

I found my Russian experiences an excellent guide in forecasting the course of events in Germany. And I played the role of Job's comforter to foreign friends and acquaintances, new to the methods of dictatorship, who would sometimes hopefully suggest that this or that unpopular measure might endanger the new order. I had seen the Soviet dictatorship survive four years which were far bleaker and hungrier for the masses of the people than anything that Germany was experiencing. And the viewpoint which I constantly expressed then, and which I see no reason to modify now, is that the modern-style dictatorship, strong in its combination of terror and propaganda, with its nucleus of party members, who

are also spies and informers, in every community, however small, cannot be overthrown by revolt in time of peace. It can only fall under the intolerable stress and strain of an unsuccessful war.

During my stay in Berlin I could see differences as well as likenesses between the Soviet Union and the Third Reich, although the basic impression of fundamental similarity remained. The industrial working class supplied the strongest element in the Communist rank and file, while the "elite," the upper ranks of the party organization, consisted of veteran professional revolutionaries of Tsarist times, many of them middle-class intellectuals, with a fairly large admixture of Jews.

The Nazi leadership, of course, was "Aryan" to a man. The hardening which the old Bolshevik had received in Tsarist prisons and on the battlefields of the civil war had been given to the typical Nazi *Gauleiter*, or local organizer, first in the trenches during the World War, then in the skirmishes and riots which had marked the uneasy life of the Weimar Republic. The typical brown-shirted rank-and-file Nazi was more apt to belong to the lower middle class than to the manual laboring class.

There was a conspicuous difference in the attitudes of the two states toward women. The Soviet Union, faced with labor shortage because of its many large industrial undertakings under the Five Year Plan, was doing everything to drag women into industry. In some towns I found that bread cards were refused to women who were not working outside of their homes. The Nazis, on the other hand, with six million unemployed in Germany when they came into power, were endeavoring to put women back into the home, dismissing women in offices and factories and replacing them with married men. It was characteristic of the similarity in outlook of the regimes, however, that the individual desires of the women received no consideration in either state.

There were also great contrasts in the economic field when I was living in Germany. The Nazi Revolution, which was just entering on its second year, was still political and social, rather than economic. The rights of private property had not been much disturbed, apart from random confiscations directed against émigrés and political opponents, although state control of foreign exchange transactions and foreign trade was already being tightened. Here, of course, a very different situation prevailed in Russia, with its nationalization of almost everything except the peasants' chickens.



I also noticed that the wheels of ordinary life revolved much more smoothly in Germany than in Russia. One could buy a ticket in a provincial railway station without waiting for hours in a disorderly queue. There was no frenzied rush to any shop that might have received a new consignment of goods. There was no evidence of the vast wastage of perishable fruit and vegetables that went on in the hungriest years in Russia because of incompetence and negligence in storage and transportation. A stranger unfamiliar with Germany might have scarcely noticed that there was anything unusual about the country, except for the numbers of uniformed marchers. No one could very well have carried away such an impression from Russia.

Part of the explanation, of course, lies in the fact that the German, as a general rule, is a more efficient and orderly human being than the Russian. But this is by no means the whole explanation. Of the two forms of what is technically called the totalitarian state, and what I prefer to call the brutalitarian state, fascism is far more efficient than communism, and for an obvious reason. The Soviet regime originated in volcanic explosion of what Gorky once called Russia's "lower depths." After the explosion it was hard to pick up the pieces of the Russian upper and middle classes. Former conspicuous wealth was an almost invariable bar to any responsible employment in the Soviet system. Great gaps were also made in the ranks of the educated and professional classes, engineers, industrial executives, farm managers, professors. Some were slaughtered during the Terror. Many more fled into permanent exile. Those who tried to carry on under the Soviets were harassed by the constant meddling supervision of ignorant suspicious Communists. And after 1928 they were always likely to be dished up to furnish circuses instead of the deficient bread to the mob in sabotage trials. The proportion of persons holding high positions for which they would be found utterly unqualified by any impartial civil service examination is far higher in the Soviet Union than in any other country.

The Nazi revolution, on the other hand, left people more or less as they were, apart from Jews and avowed political opponents. German factories and railways and estates are being managed by individuals who are trained and qualified to manage them. The contrast in efficiency was striking and obvious.

Notwithstanding these differences, I left Germany toward the

end of 1934 convinced that there was much more in common between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia than there was between either and any democratic individualist state. It seemed to me then (and I still hold this view) that both conservatives and radicals in Western countries have missed the fundamentally revolutionary character of fascism. Conservatives have been inclined to justify it, or at least to judge it mildly on the ground that it was putting unruly labor in its place. Proceeding on the same assumption, radicals have interpreted fascism as a kind of gangster protection for capitalists against the legitimate demands of labor.

But the truth of the matter—which is now, I think, being more widely recognized—is that fascism is anything but a conservative force. Restlessly aggressive in foreign policy, it has made great changes in internal social and economic relations. It is simply absurd to represent Hitler and Mussolini as taking their orders from big bankers and industrialists. The outlook for world peace would be decidedly better if they were! As F. A. Voigt says in his profound and brilliant book, "Unto Caesar,"<sup>1</sup> Hitler could behead the leading German capitalists without undermining his own power.

National Socialism in Germany, Fascism in Italy are in no sense protective devices for the maintenance of capitalism. They have already profoundly modified the individualist economic system. They may end by destroying it altogether, substituting a kind of military state socialism.

Some of the differences which I noticed in coming from Moscow to Berlin in 1934 have now disappeared or become very much attenuated. The Nazis, after pushing women into the home, are now pushing them back into factories and offices. Freedom of economic enterprise in Germany has been greatly curbed. The capitalist employer is now little more than a state manager, such as one finds in the Soviet Government trusts. He may retain nominal ownership of his property, but he must obey the orders of the state in such matters as payment of wages, dismissal of workers, investment of profits, and purchase of raw materials. He can scarcely take a step without the approval of some state agency. There has also, I think, been a shift in the nature of the class sup-

<sup>1</sup> This is by far the best exposition of the underlying philosophy and psychology of National Socialism and Communism that I have read. Although I only met Voigt personally once, I always admired his vigorous correspondence in the *Manchester Guardian* from Berlin. Unlike many other anti-Fascists, he was never deceived by the mirage of Moscow.

port of the Nazi regime. The workers have become more favorably disposed, the middle classes more inclined to grumble over the restrictions and deprivations of which they are the chief victims.

Nazi anti-Semitism has its social revolutionary character. In Germany and still more in Austria the Jews were closely identified with the bourgeoisie. The forced labor, to an accompaniment of jeers and insults, which the Nazi mob inflicted on the Jews in Vienna is strikingly similar to the treatment which the proletarian mob in Moscow and Petrograd and other Soviet cities meted out to the middle classes in 1918 and 1919.

Leveling tendencies have become more marked in Germany. The Four Year Plan of Goering has produced the same disastrous effect on individual well-being as the Five Year Plan of Stalin. At the time when I lived in Germany, food was plentiful and easy to obtain; but one economic news item from Germany after another in recent years has brought back vivid memories of Moscow in 1930 or 1931: shortage of this, that, and the other commodity, delays in transportation, lower quality of manufactured goods.

At the same time, the Soviet Union has been moving in the direction of greater inequality, as I had forecast in "Russia's Iron Age." In its restoration of titles and its new crop of uniforms, in its heady nationalism, in its campaign for more children, to be used as cannon fodder, the Soviet Union is obviously thinking more and more in fascist terms. The economic and social differences between the two systems have been steadily lessening. While Germany has been gravitating toward "brown bolshevism," Russia has been advancing along the road of "red fascism." The sensational pact between Germany and the Soviet Union in August, 1939, was no surprise to me at all; it simply confirmed my theory of the essential similarity of the two regimes.

One apparent contrast between fascism and communism, the fact that the former has been committed to a much less aggressive foreign policy than the latter, has been wiped out by Stalin's career of aggression against Poland and the Baltic States, culminating in the utterly unprovoked attack on Finland. Personally, I was never convinced of the sincerity of the Soviet professions of love of peace and moral indignation at aggression, so profusely voiced by Litvinov at Geneva.

I could not believe that a regime which, as I knew, had not hesitated to sacrifice the lives of millions of its own people in the drive

to collectivize agriculture would have any particular scruples about inflicting further loss of life in the pursuit of some imperialistic scheme of conquest. Familiar with Soviet history, I knew of the many acts of aggression, committed in out-of-the-way parts of the world, which were naturally not familiar to the average American or Englishman — the overrunning of independent Georgia, the reduction to colonial status of Outer Mongolia, the invasion of Sinkiang, the use of force to reclaim the Chinese Eastern Railway, to mention a few of the more conspicuous instances of this kind.

What held Stalin back from more frequent and visible acts of aggression was the same consideration that restrained Hitler from risking a general European war in the first years of his rule: absence of a reasonable prospect of success. Before the leading European powers were themselves engaged in war such acts as the invasion of Poland and Finland and the unresisted aggression in Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania would have very probably provoked an anti-Soviet coalition which Stalin, as the showing of the Red Army in Finland clearly indicates, would have been in no position to face.

Geography and economics, not ideology, explain German aggressiveness and Soviet quiescence in the international field, until Stalin's hands were freed for external aggression by the outbreak of the European war. The Tsars had bequeathed to the Soviets some useful fruits of imperialism, of conquest of non-Russian peoples: the oil of Baku, the manganese of Georgia, the cotton of Turkestan. And the Soviet Government has been quick to throw in the Red Army and the Gay-Pay-Oo to stamp out any moves toward self-determination by Ukrainians, Georgians, Turcomans, and other non-Russian peoples.

If a Communist regime had come into power in Germany, it would have felt just the same urge to get hold of the mineral and agricultural resources of eastern and southeastern Europe that Hitler has displayed. The only difference would have been that, instead of talking of the woes of German minorities or the needs of "vital space," the Communist rulers of Germany would have succumbed to an irresistible urge to "liberate" the "proletariat" of any country which possessed desirable oil wells, coal mines, or wheat fields.

Although I enjoyed very much the personal side of my stay in Germany—the steady work on the history, broken by occasional all-day walks and by Wagner operas and concerts and piano re-

citals in the evenings—it was with deep discouragement that I left Berlin for London, with Tokyo as my ultimate destination. A country great and rich in thought, easily first in music, second to no other in philosophy, poetry, history, and science, seemed lost to the civilized individualist European tradition that stems from the Renaissance.

How many happy vacations I had spent in the Bavarian and Austrian Alps, exchanging the universal greeting, “Grüsse Gott” with the independent, self-respecting peasants of these mountains and contrasting them with the cowed serfs who were being herded into the collective farms. Now Germany no longer gave me this consciousness of spiritual and psychological relief. The frontier of civilization had been pushed farther west. Espionage and terror stalked in Berlin, as in Moscow. It was not only in Russia that people were done to death in batches without trial.

Germany’s great poetic philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, wrote that one who combats a monster should beware lest he turn into a monster. This certainly seemed to have been the effect on the Nazis of fighting against Communism. Germany had not yet proclaimed its irrational slogan: “Cannon instead of butter.” But one could already see ominous signs of the substitution of machine guns, tanks, and airplanes for thought and artistic creation. Books were being burned, and most of the new ones that were being written could well have been consigned to the flames.

There was an epilogue to my Russo-German impressions some years later in the Far East. In Shanghai I met a former Socialist Revolutionary who had lost three fingers as a result of an unsuccessful bomb experiment. Although he preferred not to live in Russia his general judgment of the Soviet regime was quite favorable. For the greater part of an afternoon, over tea and cakes in a Shanghai café, we carried on a friendly argument over the Soviet past, present, and future. When we parted he said:

“Of course there was a great deal of cruelty, destruction, and stupidity in the Revolution. But we Russians couldn’t break through to modernization in any other way. Don’t judge us by Western standards.”

I sailed from Shanghai to Manila, and I found a very jolly and congenial table companion in a German business man. In the intervals of shuffleboard, a game to which he introduced me, we discussed German conditions. When I pressed him too hard on the

treatment of the Jews or the concentration camps (his rather naïve reply on the latter point was, "No friend of *mine* is in a concentration camp") his argument followed precisely the lines of that of my pro-Soviet friend in Shanghai.

"Don't judge us by Anglo-Saxon standards. What we have experienced is a revolution, cruel and unjust in some ways, but inevitable. Without it we should have perished as a nation."

When I arrived in Manila I wrote to the Russian in Shanghai and described the remarkable similarity between his defense of Communism and the German's defense of National Socialism. I then added:

Both of you can prove that the Bolshevik and Nazi revolutions were inevitable. But that doesn't make me like either of them a bit better.

Unless one accepts the formula that whatever is, is right, one can scarcely assume that an inevitable development is a progressive or desirable one. Attila, in his way, was inevitable, as was the Black Plague. There is ample warrant for the scriptural statement that offenses must come; but this is no reason for regarding with apologetic favor those through whom they come.

History is no unbroken upward line of human progress. It is rather a record of successive stages of advance and decadence, of higher and lower phases of human society. I believe that the robot communities which have come into existence in the Soviet Union and in Germany belong definitely in the latter category. I would see no reason to change this judgment even if, by means of some frightful catastrophe, the ideology of communism or of fascism (the two are now really indistinguishable) should conquer the whole world. After all, the dreary night of the Dark Ages followed the civilizations of Greece and Rome.

## CHAPTER NINE: *Russia in Retrospect*

*One of the reviewers of "Russia's Iron Age"* suggested that here was a book written under the hot impression of the abuses and restrictions of Moscow. How would the author feel, the reviewer continued, when he wrote his next book, perhaps after five years of living under capitalism?

The question was a fair one. Now that more than five years have passed since I left the Soviet Union, I am ready to take up its challenge. And what I feel now, just as strongly as when I departed from Moscow, with the stories of the survivors of Stalin's famine still fresh in my memory, is that nothing that has occurred in so-called capitalist countries can remotely compare in horror and brutality and degradation of mind and body with what I have seen and experienced under the Genghis Khan socialism of the Soviet Union.

Outrageous poverty and disgraceful unemployment in democratic America and England? Yes. But anything fairly comparable with the famine of 1932-1933, with the horrible conditions of peonage under which millions of Russians regularly work, with the decimation of the educated classes through purges and sabotage trials? No.

Cases of injustice, of class and race prejudice in the democratic or "capitalist" countries? Yes. Anything that could reasonably be weighed in the balance against the wholesale executions, the mass arrests and banishments that are such a regular feature of life in the Soviet Union, more than two decades after the Revolution? No.

I remember with what mixed feelings of admiration and amusement I used to read in Moscow the long accounts in the *Manchester*

*Guardian* of the shocking case, as it was described, of the Honorable Violet Douglas-Pennant. What had happened to this good lady? Had she been shot? Had she been sent to forced labor in the frozen Arctic, far away from adequate medical aid? This was the fate of a good many women of the Russian educated classes. Had she been subjected to some of the milder dispensations of Soviet "class justice," to loss of work and her home, to banishment to some backwoods town? Nothing of the kind. Long ago, during the World War, she had been summarily dismissed from some executive post; and her loyal friends were signing petition after petition demanding that the Government rescind what they considered an unjust dismissal.

I often thought how happy the average Soviet citizen would have been if his principal worry had been the loss of a position some fifteen years ago. But I would not for a moment suggest that the zeal displayed on behalf of Miss Douglas-Pennant was misplaced or wasted, even though it might sometimes seem a trifle disproportionate in view of the far graver crimes of states against individuals which went on almost unnoticed.

It is just because of the full freedom to expose and denounce even minor injustices that a Dreyfus case, a Sacco-Vanzetti case, a Mooney case is an exception and a public scandal in an individualist country. In the Soviet Union, as in other dictatorships, there are innumerable instances of this kind of injustice without any possibility of public criticism.

One can extend the comparison between "capitalism" and the Soviet dictatorship to other fields. It is obvious that in America and England bad literature and bad art sometimes flourish while genius remains unrecognized until later generations, that pressure groups of all kinds, from advertisers to Communists, occasionally prevent the expression of ideas which are distasteful to them, that the integrity of the writer and the artist is subjected to various forms of attack. But here again the element of relativity is all-important. Is any author in America or Great Britain or France required, before exercising his profession, to subscribe to any such nonsensical credo as is required of every Soviet writer:

The creation of works of high artistic significance, saturated with the heroic struggle of the international proletariat, with the grandeur of the victory of socialism and reflecting the great wisdom and heroism of the Communist Party.



Would it have any serious effect on the fortunes of a Western musician if it were known that President Roosevelt, Premier Chamberlain, or Premier Daladier did not enjoy his compositions? Certainly not. But when Stalin failed to grasp the tonal intricacies of Dmitry Shostakovitch, his operas and symphonies were promptly banished from the Soviet stage at the mere hint of the dictator's august displeasure.

To the best of my knowledge nothing in the literary experience of "capitalist" countries suggests a parallel with the periodic purges on the Soviet "literary front," the consignment to obscurity and often to prison of authors, playwrights, scientists, historians who fail to parrot with sufficient speed the changing thought fashions of the Communist ruling classes. Perhaps the most significant note on the state of arts and letters in the Soviet Union was the candid remark of a delegate to a Soviet writers' congress. On being asked why he had published nothing in recent years he replied:

"You don't go out on the street when there is a pogrom."

No, five years of return to capitalism have not softened, in retrospect, my negative impressions of the Soviet Union. Indeed it is my judgment that the frontier of "capitalism," if one wishes to give that name to an economic system where individual enterprise plays a larger role than state dictation, coincides with the frontier of civilization. I fully realize and will discuss more fully in another chapter the weaknesses and defects of the economic order which still prevails in Western Europe and America. But when one weighs this order, as a whole, in the balance against its modern challengers, communism and fascism, the contrast is between a very imperfect civilization and a quite hopeless barbarism. In the first case there is some hope of progress and regeneration, because failings are frankly admitted and remedies are freely canvassed. In the second case there is no such prospect, because the worst sides of the totalitarian state, the complete denial of liberty and the systematic violation of every right of individual personality, are not even admitted to be defects calling for correction.

Large words like "civilization" and "barbarism" are perhaps too freely bandied about. One should get down to concrete definitions.

I consider as barbarous a government which executes its citizens without public trial or after public trials that are farcical and fraudulent. I consider as barbarous a government that treats wives

and children as hostages to be punished for the offenses, real or imaginary, of their husbands and fathers. I consider as barbarous a government that forces vast numbers of its citizens to labor on public works without pay and under inhuman conditions. I consider as barbarous a government that arrogates to itself the right to dictate to every one of its subjects what he may write or say publicly.

Every one of these definitions fits the Stalinite regime. Not one of them could fairly be applied to the government of any "capitalist" country, for the fascist states have departed very far from the economic liberalism which is the distinctive mark of capitalism. The moral which I have drawn from this coincidence, which is surely too universal to be accidental, is: Long live capitalism until some other system proves equally compatible with freedom of speech and thought and with the maintenance of some minimum of decency (abstention from arbitrary arrests and killings and from wholesale espionage) in administration. In a little book which I wrote in Japan two years after I had left Moscow, entitled "Collectivism: A False Utopia," I stressed my conviction that there is an immense pragmatic value in liberty, that standards of living, as well as standards of culture and of humanity, are invariably higher in free countries than in unfree. There is an overwhelming historical association between free trade and free thought; and as soon as a government makes it a penal offense to take its money in or out of the country or to exchange it at nonofficial rates one may be sure that far graver restrictions on individual liberty are not far away.

Russia produces an indelible impression on anyone who lives there for some time, and who has a reasonable measure of curiosity and imagination. Life in Moscow is apt to drive foreigners either to think or to drink, just because it is so new, so challenging, so "different." The Soviet Union has generated among its foreign residents more hard drinking and more books, good, bad, and indifferent than any country with which I am acquainted. The reason for both these reactions is the same: the psychological stimulus or the strain, or both, of living under a social order that is so alien and unfamiliar.

So, even after I had become a voluntary émigré from the Soviet Union by presenting an uninhibited view of the Soviet Union in

"Russia's Iron Age,"<sup>1</sup> I continued to follow Soviet developments with the closest possible attention. Japan, to be sure, was not the best observation point, since fear of communism caused the authorities to impose a general ban on the circulation of Soviet newspapers. However, the *New York Times* and other foreign publications enabled me to keep in touch with the more important events. And occasionally there would be a more direct contact, when some former resident of Moscow or traveler in Russia passed through Tokyo.

My long experience in Moscow made it possible for me to read between the lines of censored dispatches, to see the significance of certain points which might have been lost on the reader with no Soviet background. By all odds the funniest and also one of the most characteristic stories of Soviet life which Harold Denny sent to the *New York Times* described the strange series of imaginary earthquakes recorded by the seismograph in a Crimean observatory. The instrument indicated devastating subterranean upheavals which were not confirmed by any other source. One day the seismograph vibrated so violently that the expert in charge of the station ran out, convinced that there was an earthquake in the town itself. Rushing into the hall, he found a proletarian chopping wood, the cause of the latest "earthquake." Investigation revealed that the other supposed upheavals were due to similar causes. One particularly devastating "earthquake" was the echo of a fist fight which had broken out among the lodgers whom the local Soviet, serenely indifferent to the claims of science, had placed in the building, along with the delicate apparatus.

Equally revealing as to the scant progress achieved in quality of production (always an especially weak point in the Soviet industrial scheme) was another message from Denny, based on the account in a Soviet newspaper of the sad fate of some new furniture which had been supplied to a workers' club. About a third of the chairs broke down with a resounding crash of splinters flying about as soon as they were subjected to the test of having someone sit on them.

I was also impressed by the implications of an Associated Press

<sup>1</sup>I am sometimes amused when I am asked whether I can return to Russia. The nerves of a dictatorship, utterly insensitive when it is a question of committing brutalities, quiver like a temperamental prima donna's when anyone has the temerity to expose these brutalities.

dispatch on comparative wages and prices (in rubles) in prewar Russia and in the Soviet Union. I append the figures, which are worth considering, in view of the widespread assumption that, whatever may be the faults of the Soviet regime, it has at least given the masses a better standard of living than they enjoyed under the Tsars:

TRADES	MONTHLY WAGES	
	1914	1937
Building trades	46.80	224
Mechanics	40.50	240

  

COMMODITIES	PRICES	
	1914	1937
Black bread	0.06	0.85
Pork	.59	11.00
Cheese	.98	14.80
Butter	1.17	20.00
Milk	.14	1.70
Cotton cloth	.21	12.00
Men's shoes	12.00	250.00
Men's suits	40.00	590.00

In other words, while the nominal wages of manual workers (a class more favored than brain workers or peasants) had increased five or six times, costs of food and clothing have risen from twelve to twenty times, with a sixtyfold increase in the cost of cotton cloth.

This impression that the standard of living in Russia had remained very low, even though the country had emerged from actual famine, was confirmed both by the reports of travelers in Russia and by Sir Walter Citrine's book, "I Search for Truth in Russia." This unpretentious work, the narrative of the Russian trip of the Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, impressed me as more valuable and informative than many books which attracted more attention. Sir Walter approached his study of Soviet labor conditions with a minimum of dogma and a maximum of common sense. Concentrating on wages and prices, on quality and availability of goods, he conveyed an eminently realistic picture of how the Russian worker lives.

André Gide's account of his disappointment in Russia was per-

haps too slight to warrant the controversy which raged around it, and which was doubtless inspired, in part, by Gide's literary reputation. But I recognized the familiar type of cocksure ignorant Soviet youth in Gide's stories of two young men whom he met. One spoke of the uselessness of learning foreign languages, "since we have already learned everything that foreign countries can teach us." The other solemnly announced that all the paper in the world could not report all the splendid things that are being done in the Soviet Union.

Occasionally I obtained closer contacts. Once in Hsinking, the capital of Manchoukuo, I saw some Soviet newspapers from Khabarovsk, headquarters of the Soviet Far Eastern Army and one of the larger towns of eastern Siberia. The tone of the writing was just what I remembered from my last years in Moscow, mean, petty, and spiteful. The newspapers were full of denunciations lodged by groups and individuals against others, of appeals for unrelenting vigilance against the ever present "class enemy." One of the most venomous articles was signed by a group of girl students in the Khabarovsk Conservatory. One could imagine them striking a good many false and jangled notes.

Once in Manchuli, the Manchoukuo border town, I stood on a hill and looked into Soviet territory. But my most dramatic confrontation with Soviet Russia was when I met Henrich Samoilovitch Lushkov, former Gay-Pay-Oo satrap of eastern Siberia, now a fugitive and something of a state prisoner in the hands of the Japanese Army. Fearing that he was marked for slaughter in a purge which had already taken the lives of the notorious Yagoda, chief of the Gay-Pay-Oo, and of some of the latter's chief associates, Lushkov prudently fled across the border and gave himself up to the Japanese military authorities. These had now produced him for a collective interview, granted to foreign correspondents.

Thanks to our knowledge of Russian, Sonya and I were able to put some questions to Lushkov directly and to short-circuit the cumbersome procedure of the interview, which required that his answers be first translated from Russian into Japanese and then retranslated into English. What he told us was interesting, but not surprising. Confessions in the sabotage and treason trials, he said, were extorted by mental and physical torture. Half a million men and women were in the prison camps of Siberia alone. The

relations between Stalin and Bluecher, who was soon afterwards removed as head of the Far Eastern Army, were far from cordial.

But what impressed me most strongly was something indescribably sinister about the man. It was something more than personal, although Lushkov was an unprepossessing type of Odessa Jew with shifty eyes, thick lips, and an unnatural pallor in his face. It was rather the sense of seeing a member of a corporation of irresponsible killers, supported by the power and resources of a large state. Comrade Lushkov, hailed in the Soviet press as "one of the best people in the Soviet Union" before his sudden flight, was a most impressive object lesson in the stupid fallacy of believing that the end justifies the means.

Looking at Lushkov, in whom one might see the fulfillment of the Revolution, whom only the accident of the purge had cast out of a high place in the ruling inner circle, I thought of how different were the pioneers of the movement against Tsarism. I remembered the beautiful classical face of Vera Figner. I thought of great minds like Peter Kropotkin, the Anarchist Prince,<sup>1</sup> distinguished as philosopher, scientist, and historian, who gave up wealth and rank for his ideas, of great hearts like Catherine Breshkovskaya, "the Grandmother of the Revolution." As I said to Sonya when we went out of the hotel room where the interview was held:

"The Revolution has certainly gone through its evolution. St. Francis of Assisi has become Scarface Al Capone."

When I left Russia I predicted that the dominant Soviet trends of the future would be more nationalism, greater inequality, and more stabilization. Events, I think, have unqualifiedly borne me out on the first two points. Nationalism has become the order of the day; "the great socialist fatherland," the favorite slogan of the Soviet orator. The former stupid and unreasonable deprecation of the Russian past has given way to an exaltation of Tsars and medieval episodes in Russian history which is equally stupid and unreasonable: because both the former fashion of deprecation and the present fashion of glorification are based not on any free play of historical research and scientific study, but on arbitrary orders, given from above for purposes of political propaganda.

<sup>1</sup> Kropotkin's last words were: "Why has the Revolution no noble side?" Had we lived until the present time, he would still have been waiting for an answer to this question.

Inequality has been growing by leaps and bounds. In this respect the period since 1933 bears a strong resemblance to the era of the Directory, after Robespierre and the more fanatic Jacobins had been sent to the scaffold. This comparison cannot be pressed too far. The denial of private property in means of production still stands in Russia. But the spread between the higher and lower wage and salary scales has increased immensely. It would take several months' wages of an ordinary worker to pay for the dresses in which wives of commissars and high military officers appear at the balls which are becoming an increasingly frequent feature of life in Moscow.

An old restraint on accumulation of wealth by Communists, the so-called *partmaximum*,<sup>1</sup> has been abolished. A Communist may now earn as much money as any other Soviet citizen. When bonuses, official automobiles, and other perquisites of office are reckoned in, it seems probable that the differential in standard of living between the head of a Communist state trust and the worker in one of the trust's factories is as great as that between Henry Ford and one of his laborers.

The restoration of officers' titles in the Army and Navy, of epaulettes and salutes, of uniforms for school students (an institution of Tsarist times, abolished after the Revolution), the introduction of the title of doctor in the Soviet academic system—all these changes are obvious concessions to the irrepressible human instinct for outward signs of distinction. In some ways I could make out a case for the fulfillment of my third prediction, greater stabilization; but I failed to anticipate one of the most important and dramatic events of the last five years in Russia, the systematic extermination of almost all the prominent surviving old Communists, along with many well known Soviet Army officers and diplomats.

Sitting in Tokyo I was amazed at the lists of names, many of them all-powerful when I had been in Moscow, which appeared on Stalin's constant new proscription lists. The purge which began in 1936 and continued for some years took as many lives as the fiercest phase of the Terror in the French Revolution. One

<sup>1</sup> This was a system, introduced by Lenin himself, of restricting the earnings of Communists, even in the highest positions, to the approximate wage of skilled workers. It was never practiced very thoroughly, and there were various opportunities for evasion; but while it lasted it imposed limitations on any display of grossly luxurious living.

significant fact reveals both the scope and the main purpose of this slaughter.

At the time of Lenin's death the Political Bureau, or highest steering committee of the Communist party, consisted of seven members: Stalin, Trotzky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomsky. Four of these men, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, and Bukharin, have been shot. Tomsky was hounded into committing suicide. (Suicides, actual or fictitious, have become increasingly numerous among highly placed Communists in recent years. Besides Tomsky, the veteran Ukrainian Communist leader Skripnik, the former Ukrainian Premier Lubchenko, and the former head of the Political Department of the Red Army, Gamar-nik, are all reported as having taken their own lives. It is also highly probable that Stalin's second wife, Alleluyeva, committed suicide.) Trotzky only escaped execution because he was exiled before Stalin commenced the practice of killing political opponents within the party.

The purge has been equally devastating for the Soviet armed forces, and for the Soviet diplomatic corps. Since I left Russia it has been a question which has been the most dangerous profession: that of an old Bolshevik, a hero of the civil war, or a Soviet ambassador. The list of commanders of the Soviet Army, Navy, and Air Force who have been shot reads like an honor roll of those who have distinguished themselves in the civil war and in the subsequent period of reconstructing the Red Army. Marshal M. N. Tukhachevsky, who was shot with seven other generals, in 1937, without any open trial, was mainly responsible for the defeat of Admiral Kolchak, one of the two most formidable anti-Bolshevik leaders in the civil war. Eidemann, who was killed with him, was the founder of Soviet civil aviation and a former head of the Soviet Military Academy. Another name that was familiar to me from my study of the history of the Revolution was that of Primakov, a daring Soviet cavalry leader who helped to turn the tide against General Denikin in the critical campaign of the autumn of 1919. Not one of the high officers who were put to death could have been reasonably suspected of sympathy with the old regime. All had made their careers under the Revolution.

A French aviation expert, General Paul Armengaud, has given a detailed account of the relative deterioration of the Soviet air force since 1937. The cause of this deterioration is a purge which



swept away not only the outstanding leaders of the Soviet Air Force, but also Russia's most distinguished aviation construction engineer, Professor N. Tupolev. And the efficiency of the Red Navy has scarcely been enhanced by the disappearance of every admiral who was serving in 1937.

Diplomacy has given its full quota of victims, including men who have represented the Soviet Union in every important European and Asiatic capital: Sokolnikov in London, Rakovsky in Paris, Krestinsky in Berlin, Kamenev in Rome, Karakhan and Bogomolov in China, Yurenev in Japan. The causes of the purge are varied and to some extent conjectural. Some of the killings were probably accidental; but most of them fit into several pretty obvious patterns.

In the case of Tukhachevsky and the other generals no public evidence of any kind was presented. A whispering campaign (remarkably similar to that which followed the Nazi purge of June 30, 1934) was started to the effect that the men who had been shot were engaged in treasonable communication with the German Reichswehr. The best commentary on the plausibility of this theory is the recent pact concluded between Stalin and Hitler. Precisely the reverse, I am convinced, was true. The generals, among whom Gamarnik especially possessed the reputation of being a devoted Communist, were opposed to Stalin's pro-Nazi maneuvers. Nothing would be more in keeping with Stalin's cynical and tortuous mentality than to destroy the generals and at the same time to destroy their characters by attributing to them a scheme which he was himself holding in reserve for the future. One must also remember that Stalin is nervously fearful of a Bonapartist coup and is thus under a constant temptation to kill off the most promising and popular military commanders, regardless of the effect of this policy on the efficiency of the army.

In the case of those old Bolsheviks who were brought to public trial there were confessions, plenty of them, almost too full to be convincing: confessions of secret meetings with the arch villain Trotzky, for which Trotzky in almost every case, incidentally, was able to present a documentary alibi; confessions of participation in the assassination of Sergei Kirov, Stalin's Leningrad lieutenant (almost everyone in Russia seems to have had a hand in this murder); confessions of poisoning the former head of the Gay-Pay-Oo, Menzhinsky, a notoriously stupid Communist bureaucrat

named Kuibishev, and the author Maxim Gorky; confessions of betraying Soviet secrets to foreign powers, of wrecking railway trains, of all sorts of miscellaneous industrial sabotage.

Anyone naïve enough to accept the trial records at their face value, without any attempt to read between the lines or any knowledge of certain peculiarities of Soviet jurisprudence, would gain the impression that the typical old Bolshevik is a spy and a traitor with a disposition to commit crimes varying in character from the puerile to the insane, that the typical Soviet diplomat can scarcely wait twenty-four hours to accept the bribes of some foreign intelligence service, and that many Soviet captains of industry feel that it is an unsuccessful day when they have not derailed two railway trains, blown up four mines, and deranged half a dozen sugar factories.

These treason and sabotage trials have placed the unconditional admirer of the Soviet regime before an awkward dilemma. If the picture presented by the trials was substantially accurate, a large number of the leaders of the Revolution, including some of Lenin's closest associates, were almost incredible scoundrels and fools, capable at once of complete treachery to their country and to the Revolution and of acts of petty sabotage which were certain to bring ultimate detection, but which could not reasonably be expected to upset the existing regime. If, on the other hand, one considers the evidence at the trials as inherently untrustworthy and predominantly fraudulent, the Stalinite dictatorship stands exposed as one of the most cruel and cynical despotisms in history, making a systematic practice of assassinating the characters as well as the bodies of those whom it wishes to get rid of.

The dilemma was not an agreeable one for the believer that all is for the best in the Soviet world. And I noticed with satisfaction that the trials made deep inroads into the ranks of Soviet sympathizers. It is true that I could not personally share the standards of moral and humane values or the sense of proportion of individuals who accepted with equanimity all the cruelties of the Soviet regime against the peasants, against the intelligentsia, and against the Russian people and only became critical after the executioners' bullets were directed against Trotzkyists and other old Communists. Still anything that diminishes the infatuation of a part of the liberal and radical intelligentsia in Western countries with the barbarous Asiatic despotism which masquerades as a

“democratic” venture in social progress is to be welcomed. And I observed that persons who first abandoned an uncritically pro-Soviet attitude because of the trials were often later inclined to adopt a more reasonable and realistic attitude all along the line.

Not that this infatuation has altogether disappeared. For the last decade and more I have been alternately amused and disgusted by what seemed to me the utterly illogical attitude of a considerable number of liberals and radicals toward the Soviet Union. Their indignation, which I fully shared, at acts of cruelty, violence, and oppression in fascist countries has been completely vitiated morally, in my opinion, by their incessant and incurable impulse to apologize for precisely similar outrages, often costing greater numbers of human lives and producing the same inevitable degradation of human personality, in the Soviet Union.

Of the two horns of the dilemma which I described, I am inclined to adopt the assumption that the trials were largely, although not entirely, fraudulent. Once, after reading in an American magazine a glorification of the trials as “a triumph of democracy,” accompanied by what seemed to me the fantastic assumption that all the old revolutionaries and Red Army generals who had been shot were agents of Hitler, I set down on paper four main reasons why I am a skeptic in regard to the trials and their accompanying confessions. These are:

(1) Complete absence of independent testimony and of documentary evidence. The Government’s case always rests primarily on the confessions of defendants who have been held in prison for months or years, with some secondary support from witnesses who incriminate themselves by their testimony, who are usually brought from prison to testify.

(2) In all Soviet political trials there is a striking contrast between the magnitude of the confessions and the meagerness of the results which have been achieved. The defendants talk glibly of planning to overthrow the Soviet Government, of making agreements with representatives of foreign powers. But all they can show in the way of concrete activity is a few wrecks on railways and explosions in factories, which might have been the result of incompetence as easily as of malice; the alleged poisoning of four persons, not one of whom occupied a major position in the Government; the assassination of Stalin’s lieutenant in Leningrad, Kirov. The explanation of Kirov’s death has been changed so often, in conformity with the exigencies

of each new trial, that no one can feel sure which, if any, of the versions is correct.

(3) Frequent gross discrepancies between the confessions of the accused and the few facts, relating to events abroad, which are subject to critical examination.

(4) The behavior of the defendants, especially in the trials of opposition Communists, simply does not make sense psychologically. Assume that the charges against them are true. Assume also that for some reason, despite the absence of independent witnesses and documentary evidence, they decided to admit their guilt. Is it conceivable (except on the basis of some very strong and sinister pressure, moral or physical or both) that not one of them took the opportunity to attempt the sole possible justification of his acts by denouncing Stalin and his regime? In a preceding chapter I have indicated the kind of pressure (ranging from physical torture to threats to exterminate all the members of a prisoner's family) which the Gay-Pay-Oo habitually employs.

I think the underlying motive of the purge of old Communists is clear, although the choice of some of the victims, just as in the batches of victims who were sent to the guillotine during the French Revolution, is puzzling and obscure and may well have been accidental in some cases.

Stalin, with his instinct for absolute power, decided to destroy every surviving figure with an independent reputation for activity in the years of the Revolution. In this way he prepared the transition from a party dictatorship with a certain ideological foundation to a purely personal despotism, in which loyalty to himself, not to any ideal of Marxism or communism, would be the sole condition of political advancement. Of Stalin's closest associates at the present time only one, War Commissar Voroshilov, whose political intelligence is very limited, played any conspicuous part in the Revolution. The others are either mediocrities, like the Premier, Molotov, or men, like Kaganovitch and Zhdanov, who were too young to distinguish themselves at the time of the Revolution. All are therefore, in the fullest sense of the word, Stalin's creatures, like the pashas whom an Oriental sultan may appoint and behead at his pleasure. There is important international significance in this transformation of a party into a personal dictatorship. Ten years ago Stalin could not have allied himself with a fascist power. Today he is entirely free from any such inhibitions.

He is as free as Hitler or Mussolini to carry on an entirely opportunistic foreign policy.

One of the latest Moscow anecdotes is that Stalin, having killed all his friends, is now beginning on his acquaintances. There are few dictators in history who have maintained themselves in power on the corpses of so many former associates. And the nature of the state which he has created fits in admirably with his Oriental antecedents. It is a dark Asiatic despotism, permeated with treachery, real or suspected. And the ultimate arbiter in state affairs is the modern Gay-Pay-Oo equivalent for the poison and the bow-string: the revolver shot in the brain.

Of course the most primitive native potentate may put on a frock coat and top hat for ceremonial occasions. Stalin's equivalent for such a costume was the constitution—"the most democratic in the world," as he called it with conscious or unconscious humor—which he promulgated to the edification of the Soviet faithful abroad whom not even the trials could disabuse. Now what the constitution changed in the absolutist character of the Soviet state was precisely nothing. Its assurances of freedom of speech, press, assembly, and election are simply laughable in the light of the everyday realities of Soviet life.

Not a single opposition newspaper is permitted. If any Soviet citizen has uttered public criticism of any of Stalin's policies, the fact has escaped the notice of the foreign correspondents in Moscow, who would have certainly hastened to send any such startling "news." Arbitrary arrests and executions have been just as numerous after as before the announcement of the constitution. Indeed a number of delegates who were "elected" to the Soviet parliament were whisked off to death or imprisonment without the formality of notification to their "electors."

A friend who recently came from Russia showed me a Soviet election bulletin which told the voter gently but firmly exactly what he had to do on election day. It was a very revealing document. Only one candidate was offered for choice, and the voter was especially cautioned not to write in any other name and not to make any change in the official ballot. Compared with Stalin's hand-picked parliament the Tsarist Duma, elected though it was under a very unfair system which weighted the scales in favor of the propertied and conservative classes, could be considered democratic and representative. It at least admitted a few repre-

sentatives of the extreme opposition. Half a dozen Bolshevik deputies sat in the last prewar Duma, and Lenin, from abroad, sometimes wrote their speeches for them. I shall be inclined to take Stalin's "democratic" constitution seriously when there is a group of Trotzkyist deputies in the Soviet parliament and when one of these deputies reads a speech on Stalin's personality and policies, prepared for him by Trotzky in Mexico.

Years of absence from Russia have not dimmed its fascination as a subject of discussion. Apart from my work for the *Monitor*, I probably wrote as much during my stay in Tokyo about the Soviet Union and the general totalitarian challenge to individualist civilization as about Far Eastern questions. In talks and in written arguments with friends, acquaintances, and strangers my viewpoint has been criticized mainly on two grounds. The first is the rather boring one (similar in intellectual weight to its right-wing opposite, "If these foreign radicals don't like America, why don't they go back where they came from?") that I am disqualified for objective observation because I am a searcher for Utopia who became soured and "disillusioned" on not finding the object of the quest in Russia.

My old boss Heywood Broun, who himself steered a rather erratic intellectual course from H. G. Wells liberalism via Stalinism to Catholicism, took me to task in the *Nation* on this familiar charge, basing his criticism on an article of mine which evidently he had not read with any care: for in it there was not a suggestion that Russia had failed to live up to the standards of Utopia, whatever these may be. The point I had made was that, in state-organized brutality, the Soviet Union had exceeded the records of its fellow dictatorships in Germany and Italy; and I imagine Broun would have agreed with me that neither Nazi Germany nor Fascist Italy could reasonably be mistaken for Utopia.

I think the description of my Russian experiences and the evolution of reaction in earlier chapters give an idea of whether, in relation to Russia, I conformed to the rather fanciful pattern of the cranky idealist who goes to Moscow expecting great and wonderful things and leaves in a huff because the hot water doesn't run in his bathroom. As for the reasons which led me to quit Russia with a predominantly negative impression of the Soviet regime in its Stalinite phase—the starving to death of millions of peasants, the banishment to forced labor of millions more, the persecution

of the educated classes, the universal espionage and terror—it seems to me that these were quite adequate causes for a fundamental change of viewpoint. Although I do not pride myself on a stubborn clinging to a preconceived idea, I have never felt the slightest doubt, on the basis of such information as I have obtained about Russia during my years of absence, that my last views on the Soviet Union, as set forth in “Russia’s Iron Age” were basically correct.

The other criticism, that I failed to take full account of Russia’s historical backwardness, deserves more serious examination. I certainly did not overlook the dark shadow of the Russian past. In fact the chapter in “Russia’s Iron Age” which I personally like best is entitled “Old Russia in New Masks.” Here I put together many striking parallels between episodes in Russian history and contemporary Soviet events. For many of these parallels I had to go back into very dark corners of medieval Russia.

But accurate knowledge of Russian history does not bear out the specious argument that whatever Stalin has done is at least not quite as bad as the record of his Tsarist predecessors. The argument is plausible because few Europeans and fewer Americans are well acquainted with Russian history. But it does not stand up before a serious analysis of the facts.

Both Tsarist and Soviet systems have been the object of terrorist attacks. The number of Tsarist Ministers, governors, and police chiefs killed by revolutionaries exceeds the number of high Soviet officials killed by “counterrevolutionaries.” But the sequels to these attacks were very different.

When the Soviet gaema in Petrograd, Moses Uritzky, was killed by a Socialist Revolutionary in the summer of 1918 over five hundred persons, none of whom had anything to do with the killing, were taken out of the prisons of Petrograd and butchered. Of course this was in a time of civil war, but the same infamous method of killing innocent people purely as a reprisal has been repeatedly practiced under the Soviets in times of complete peace. (It may well have given the German Nazis the idea for the pogroms and spoliation of the Jews which followed the murder of a German diplomat by a Jewish emigrant in Paris.)

So, after Sergei Kirov was shot by a Communist named Nikolayev in 1934, one hundred and thirty-three persons, according to an official communiqué, were put to death. Of these only

fourteen, including the assassin, were even accused of direct complicity in the murder. And since that time the ghost of Kirov has been conjured up whenever Stalin wished to slaughter another batch of Communists.

What was the reaction of "the bloody Tsars," as they are called in Soviet propaganda, in the face of similar provocation? The assassination of Alexander II, the Tsar who abolished serfdom, was at least as grave a crime, from the Tsarist standpoint, as the killing of Uritzky and Kirov, from the Soviet standpoint; but only five persons, all unquestionably participants in the assassination, were put to death. There was no killing of suspected revolutionaries in prisons. There were no subsequent trials, demanding new victims for the same offense.

The many veteran Communists who have been sentenced to "the highest measure of social defense, i.e. shooting" by Stalin's quick-firing courts could have offered interesting personal testimony on the contrasts between Tsarist and Soviet justice. Rykov and Bukharin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, Karakhan and Yenukidze, to name a few of the more prominent victims of the purge, were all old offenders in the records of the police. Their program aimed at the overthrow of the Imperial regime. Had Stalin's judicial standards prevailed in prewar Russia every one of them, indeed every prominent leader of the Revolution would have been put to death. On the contrary, they all survived, to meet death in the end at the hands of their former comrade. The case of Stalin himself is very instructive. He was implicated in the famous Tiflis State Bank hold-up, which was accompanied by bomb-throwing and considerable loss of life. Arrested five times for revolutionary activity, Stalin was sent to places of exile where he was so loosely guarded that he was always able to escape and resume his plotting and agitation. It is safe to say that no one ever plotted against Stalin with so much impunity.

I have already pointed out that the Tsarist Duma offered far more expression to dissident opinion than the Stalinite Congress of Soviets. And there was far more opportunity to voice political criticism in camouflaged form before the war than there is at present. No one of the five Tsars who ruled Russia from the beginning of the nineteenth century until the Revolution has a homicide record remotely comparable with Stalin's. In order to match Stalin a Tsar would have been obliged to kill most of his Cabinet Ministers,



his best known generals, many of his diplomats and captains of industry. One would have to go back at least as far as Ivan the Terrible to find any such holocaust.

Another point on which the most ruthless Tsar could have learned much from Stalin is in the weird alleged motivation of his killings. Only the occasional ritual murder cases in prewar Russia bear a strong similarity to the Soviet sabotage trials. But the offenses for which revolutionaries suffered under the Tsars were reasonable and credible: participation in riots and insurrections, circulation of illegal publications, holding of forbidden meetings. One does not find that they were accused of, much less forced to confess, such grotesquely improbable crimes as poisoning Ministers, wrecking railway trains, failing to provide cows with the proper kind of bulls and injecting into silkworms parasites which would make them indifferent to mulberry leaves. (All these charges and many others, equally absurd, have been brought against "saboteurs" in the Soviet Union.)

In short the Tsarist autocracy, one of the most cruel and oppressive governments in prewar Europe, seems mild and humane by comparison with Stalin's dictatorship. This, incidentally, is an ominous sign of the general decay of civilization since the World War.

I have never regretted my decision to leave Russia. Journalistic work there would have become increasingly irksome, would have imposed a greater and greater strain on my sense of integrity. I should have found particularly objectionable the inability to do more than hint at what I am convinced is the true motivation of the long series of treason and sabotage trials and executions.

There is little reason, I am afraid, to expect any great change in Soviet conditions, except perhaps as part of the general crash that would follow an unsuccessful war. For I think the supreme crime against the human spirit of Stalinism, as of every dictatorial regime, is the blunting and even extinction of the normal moral sense through its double mechanism of propaganda and terrorism. A famous Russian classical playwright, Aleksei Tolstoy (not to be confused with the novelist and philosopher Leo Tolstoy), once wrote that what aroused his indignation about Ivan the Terrible was not so much his crimes as the absence of any indication of public disapproval of these crimes. I have often experienced precisely the same feeling about Stalin.

Here the moral degeneration, by comparison with prewar Russia, is most marked and depressing. The pogroms against the Jews in Tsarist times took a very small number of victims, by comparison with Stalin's pogroms against the intelligentsia, against the peasants, against the dissident Communists. Yet these prewar outrages evoked in the educated classes a lively and general condemnation which is almost completely absent in Russia today. After all, the prewar Russian intelligentsia had its share in the humanistic culture of Europe. To the Soviet intelligentsia (if the word can still be used with any sense of fitness) this culture means about as much as the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas would have meant to a Turkish Janizary.

But, if one may not reasonably expect, one may still hope. Civilization knows ascending as well as declining phases. I hope some day to see a Germany that places its great thinkers and artists, Kant and Goethe, Beethoven and Heine, far above the barbarous heroes of the Third Reich. I hope to see an Italy where the generous spirit of the Risorgimento, of Mazzini and Garibaldi, will have replaced the bullying swagger of Fascism. And for the same reasons, and even more ardently, because I know the Russians better than the Germans and Italians, I hope to see the Asiatic despotism which has trapped the countrymen of Tolstoy and Metchnikov and Kropotkin swept away, the Gay-Pay-Oo prisons and concentration camps go the way of the Bastille.

## CHAPTER TEN: *Assignment to Tokyo*

Just before we sailed for Japan we received a letter from Countess Panina, one of our Russian friends in Prague.

So you are going to Japan [she wrote]. I imagine you will find it the greatest contrast to Russia in every way, in size, in climate, in the political system and the habits of the people.

And Tokyo, scene of my second longest journalistic assignment abroad, was indeed a profound change after Moscow. The family, completely disrupted in Russia, was the basic unit of Japanese life. When two Russians became involved in a collision the unprintable "mother oath" resounded through the air. When two of Tokyo's innumerable bicyclists ran into each other they would bow and exchange formally polite expressions, even though hatred might be in their hearts.

Russia had just emerged from an immense revolution from the bottom; Japan was a country where revolutions had always been made from the top. The islands inhabited by seventy million Japanese, a remarkably homogeneous people, were entirely different from the vast sprawling continental Soviet land empire, with its scores of races and tribes; and the little patches of carefully tended rice land in Japan were strange to an eye accustomed to the rolling wheat fields of Ukraina and the North Caucasus.

We traveled to Japan by way of America, where I gave a few lectures on the Soviet Union, especially in the Western states. Crossing the Pacific on the Japanese ship *Asama Maru* (named, incidentally, in honor of a volcanic mountain of which we enjoyed a fine view from our summer cottage in Karuizawa), we each began

to get into contact with Japan in different ways. I read a dozen books, good, bad, and indifferent, about the country, following my habit of marking and making notes on the most significant passages. Sonya struggled with the infinite complexities of conversational Japanese with the aid of a grammar which she had acquired in Berlin and tried out her skill on the smiling, bowing stewards and stewardesses. Elizabeth established the most direct contact by playing with some Japanese children on the boat. One day she came up to us big with the excitement of a new discovery and said:

"You know, in America girls go first; but in Japan it is boys who go first."

Among my books the two which I found most permanently valuable were Lafcadio Hearn's "Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation" and Sir George Sansom's "Japan: A Short Cultural History." I was to meet Sir George Sansom, the Commercial Counselor of the British Embassy in Tokyo, later in the Japanese capital. He impressed me as one of the very few foreigners who might fairly claim to understand Japan, shut off from the outside world both by a terrific language barrier and by a peculiar insular national psychology. Sir George, who had lived in Japan for decades, was an excellent Japanese scholar and possessed a rich, discriminating, sensitive knowledge of the Japanese past in history, art, and philosophy. At the same time he was a leading expert on the economics of contemporary Japan. Some of the pleasantest hours which Sonya and I spent in Tokyo were in the home of Sir George and Lady Sansom, the latter the author of a charming book on everyday life in Tokyo.

We met two interesting fellow passengers, of very contrasted types. One was the new Mexican Ambassador to Japan, General Francisco Aguilar, who reminded me in many ways of my old ex-I.W.W. friend of Moscow days, George Andreytchine, one of the many victims of the purge against the Trotzkyists. Like Andreytchine, the Mexican diplomat was a very exuberant personality, full of fun and vitality, with a rich fund of anecdotes drawn from a life which had included a good deal of fighting and some periods of hardships and exile. An American popular magazine had published an article with the suggestive title, "The Latin is a Lousy Lover," and Aguilar, under a pseudonym, rushed out with a very plain-spoken refutation of this charge, which he described in some

detail, to the great embarrassment of a stiff British lady who was among the guests one evening at our home in Tokyo. He was to prove something of a trial to the stuffed shirts of the Tokyo diplomatic world, especially because of his outspoken sympathy with the Spanish Republicans and his pronounced anticlericalism. From talks with him on the boat and later in Tokyo I gained some idea of the spirit of the Mexican revolution, neither communist nor fascist, although with elements of both these postwar upheavals, combined with a good deal of rough-and-tumble social democracy.

Another companion on the boat, very different from the doughty General, who gave the impression that the best way to deal with counterrevolutionaries was to shoot first and ask questions afterwards, was Muriel Lester, a British social worker who, on religious grounds, regarded war as utterly sinful and wealth as little less so. She was an admirer of Gandhi and an active crusader against the international traffic in drugs. A magnetic speaker, Miss Lester possessed what idealists sometimes lack, a sense of humor. When we last met her in Paris, in the spring of 1939, she remarked with a smile:

“It’s a little embarrassing to have the French tell me how much they appreciate the adoption of conscription in England—when I have opposed conscription all my life.”

She soon went on from Tokyo to China, and India, but kept us and other friends informed of her travels by sending mimeographed copies of an informal journal, in which she jotted down experiences and impressions. One of her stories, both amusing and characteristic, was about her call on the Japanese Consul-General in Tientsin. She had gone armed with facts and figures about opium and heroin dens which Japanese and Koreans were operating in north China under the protection of extraterritorial privileges.

The worthy Japanese diplomat had evidently looked up her record before receiving her and discovered that religion was one of her main interests. So, as soon as she had been introduced, he launched into an eloquent and prolonged harangue on the desirability and necessity of religion, hoping thereby to forestall inconvenient questions about the drug trade. He even declared that a new religion was “sweeping” Japan, but proved unable to furnish its name.

During our first few weeks in Tokyo we lived in the general

rendezvous of newly arrived foreigners, the Imperial Hotel. It was built by an American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, according to a very original architectural design, irregular in shape, with many involved corridors. Altogether it was very different from the unimaginative imitations of Des Moines and Portland which often emerge when the Japanese put up a foreign-style hotel.

Finding permanent living quarters, we discovered, was almost as difficult a problem in Tokyo as in Moscow, but for a different reason. In Moscow there was an absolute acute shortage of housing space. In Tokyo the vast majority of the people live in the distinctive Japanese style houses, fragile creations of bamboo and clay, with paper windows and thin sliding screens as doors, with cushions and mats taking the place of furniture. Charming to the eye, the Japanese house is very uncomfortable for the average foreigner, especially in the raw, windy Tokyo winters, because they cannot be adequately heated and are very much exposed to draughts.

There are only a handful of apartment houses in the whole city of some six million inhabitants, and foreign-style houses are few and not easily obtainable. We finally found one, however; and for the next four years 258 Shirokane Sankocho, Tokyo, replaced 15 Borisoglebsky Pereulok, Moscow, as our permanent address. Our house, squarely built and without a trace of aesthetic quality, was reasonably comfortable and was located in an agreeable residential section. And we appreciated more and more, especially in the hot and steamy months of the year, the abundant green which is so characteristic of a city where almost every house has its garden, large or small.

First impressions, I find, are always the most vivid and often not the least accurate. A few random observations which I noted in my diary during my first days in Tokyo proved to be quite significant as clues to certain aspects of Japanese life.

One of the first features that distinguished Tokyo from the other large Oriental city which I had known, Shanghai, was the vast number of curious hieroglyphs, the signs of various shops, offices, and public buildings. Sonya could occasionally make out a character; but I realized at once that a knowledge of written Japanese would require years of hard study.

The language barrier between Japan and the outside world is indeed formidable. I never met a correspondent of a well known

foreign newspaper or news agency who could casually pick up and read a Japanese newspaper, magazine, or book. Guenther Stein, a former correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* who had established himself in Tokyo as representative of several British newspapers and magazines, and who became one of our best friends there, estimated that it would take ten years, provided that one could not devote all one's time to the subject, to express oneself with fair proficiency in Japanese. And he had studied conscientiously in a special school for teaching Japanese to foreigners which is largely attended by young missionaries.

Almost the only persons who are able to speak Japanese fluently, to say nothing of being able to read and write it, are foreigners born in the country and diplomats, military and naval officers, and missionaries who have spent from two to four years in Japanese language study, to the exclusion of every other activity. Consequently news in Japan, to a much greater extent than in any European country, can be followed only through the medium of translation services. The noteworthy ambiguity of the Japanese language is another barrier to clear-cut understanding. Very often a phrase in Japanese may be legitimately rendered in two ways, one carrying an aggressive, the other a conciliatory, connotation. The result is that, even when one has an interview with a Japanese official taken down by a stenographer and rendered into English by a competent translator, there still remains the possibility of the later repudiation of some phrase on the ground of misunderstanding.

Two of the first Japanese whom I met in Tokyo, Yoshio Nitobe and Iwao Ayusawa, had been fellow students at Haverford. The former, adopted son of Dr. Inazo Nitobe, one of Japan's best known scholars and publicists, had been editor of the college magazine to which I was a steady contributor. Ayusawa, head of the branch of the International Labor Office in Tokyo, was most helpful to me in obtaining information about Japanese economics and labor conditions.

It was while I was visiting, along with Nitobe, a museum attached to the Yasakuni shrine, sacred to the souls of Japanese who have fallen in their country's war, that I received one of my strongest early impressions of Japan. I stopped before the pictures of a Japanese and his wife, struck by the remarkable expression of exaltation and devotion in their faces. I was reminded of some of

the Russian revolutionaries of the seventies and the eighties, as I had seen them either in actual life or in pictures.

Nitobe explained that the pictures were of General Nogi and his wife. Both committed suicide immediately after the death of the famous Emperor Meiji, whose reign began with Japan's opening of its doors to the West and ended after the first great test of Japanese national strength, the war with Russia. Nogi had taken his life because he did not wish to survive his Emperor, his wife because she would not live longer than her husband. There is another element in Nogi's suicide which became widely known and is a popular theme of poetry in Japan. He had been in command of the operations against Port Arthur, where some of the most sanguinary fighting of the Russo-Japanese War took place. Two of his sons, junior officers, had been killed there.

After the war Nogi brooded not only over the loss of his sons, but over the numbers of his soldiers who had been killed. Perhaps, he thought, some of the lives had been lost unnecessarily through faults in his strategy. He thought of offering his own life in expiation, and only the plea of the old Emperor induced him to remain alive until after the former's death. Such a story makes a powerful appeal to the Japanese popular imagination. The shrine which has been erected in Nogi's honor attracts a great number of pilgrims and worshipers. Despite their surface modernism, the Japanese are still under the spell of the medieval samurai tradition. The legend of the warrior-hero fascinates them, especially when along with it there is the element of giving one's own life for a point of honor. The Japanese believe, although not in the Christian sense, that he who loses his life shall save it.

Another impression, of insularity, of lack of understanding of Western terms, of absence of a sense of humor, was conveyed when I received a visit in the hotel from an amiable Japanese professor who was also a popular writer in the newspapers. After expounding the idea that it would only be just and natural for Japan to take over north China, Outer Mongolia, and eastern Siberia he remarked, with a deprecating smile:

"Some people say I'm an imperialist. But I think I am only a sane liberal."

I remembered this amusing definition of "a sane liberal" when a critically minded foreigner said to me:

"You will find that on any internationally disputed question



there are just two viewpoints, in the opinion of every Japanese. These are the Japanese viewpoint and the wrong viewpoint."

I learned that the Japanese possess eminently single-track minds when I went into a bank and reduced a quite intelligent young clerk to complete confusion by making two quite simple requests at the same time. He could have attended to either quite easily if it had been made separately. But it was impossible to carry the two trains of thought in his mind at the same time.

My journalistic problems in Tokyo were quite different from what they had been in Moscow. In the Soviet capital one often found oneself confronted with a blank wall of official secrecy and negation, reinforced by a censorship armed with the power of expulsion. In Tokyo the atmosphere was rather that of a perpetual haze and mist. The Tokyo newspapers announced and discussed alleged decisions of the Government with an abundance of circumstantial detail that seemed amazing after the uncommunicative columns of the strictly controlled Soviet press. But one never knew with certainty how much in these interesting accounts was fact, how much was pure guesswork and how much could be considered a combination of the two. Dr. Herbert von Dirksen, whom I had formerly known as German Ambassador in Moscow and who now held the same post in Tokyo, once said to me that the task of gauging political trends was vastly complicated because no newspaper could be considered a consistent mouth-piece of the Government's viewpoint.

The Japanese press was controlled, quite strictly in some ways, especially after the outbreak of the war in China. But the control was negative, not positive. Editors were informed, in communications from the police, what they might not print. (Incidentally this rather naïve method of so-called police bans sometimes had the effect of spreading, at least within a limited circle of editors and journalists, news of events which the authorities wished to conceal.) But they were not told what they must print. The Japanese newspapers, despite the constant surveillance of the police, remained private enterprises, published primarily for the purpose of attracting as many readers as possible. They were not mere organs of government propaganda, like newspapers in the Soviet Union, Germany, and Italy.

Reliability, I soon discovered, was not a cardinal virtue of Japanese journalism. Several of the Tokyo newspapers fairly revel

in scandalous gossip. If there are any libel laws in Japan they seem to have no restraining effect. After the almost complete absence of the personal note in the Soviet press it was both surprising and amusing to read in translations from the Japanese newspapers how one Minister was laid up as a result of a prolonged drinking bout, how another had resorted to weird homeopathic concoctions to restore his lost vitality, how two well known diplomats became involved in an inebriated fracas in a restaurant, with the result that one cracked the other over the head with an arm rest.

If the newspapers were unreliable, other sources of information were little better. Japanese Ministers talked for publication more frequently than Soviet Commissars. But what they said was usually a cloud of vague platitudes and generalities.

Information to foreign correspondents was, in the main, communicated by the spokesman for the Foreign Office. Three times a week some twenty-five or thirty correspondents of a dozen various nationalities gathered in a room in one of the low wings of the Gaimusho, or Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for a session of questions and answers with the spokesman. On steamy summer days a nondescript beverage (I never could positively identify it as either iced tea or iced coffee) was served. While one was free to put any question, the spokesman was also free to give any or no reply. "We have no report" was a convenient formula for dodging inconvenient inquiries.

But, if the sessions at the Gaimusho were not always informative, they were often entertaining. The cosmopolitan group of newspapermen resembled a miniature League of Nations, and the issues at stake between governments often found their reflection in the questions and answers. Bad feeling between Japan and Great Britain antedated the war in China, and Mr. Eiji Amau, the Foreign Office spokesman during my first years in Tokyo, fell into the habit of reading allegedly inaccurate reports about events in China from the British Reuter news agency. He would then invariably add:

"It is deplorable that such a great news agency as Reuter should be losing all credit in Japan because of such reports."

One day the Reuter correspondent evidently felt that this baiting had gone on long enough and audibly retorted:

"It may be losing credit in Japan. It is not losing credit in China—or in England."

There would be occasional frontal clashes between Amau and

the Soviet Tass correspondent, in which one could hear an echo of the frequent skirmishes along the Soviet-Manchurian frontier. Amau, whose name became internationally known when he issued a statement warning foreign powers against granting political loans to China, maintained the pose of a stiff nationalist. When he said, as he often did, that it was Japan's exclusive duty to maintain "peace and order in East Asia" one could almost hear the bombs explode and the machine guns rattle in his tone.

Amau's successor, Mr. Tatsuo Kawai, was more of a feather-bed personality. He proceeded on the principle that a slow answer turns away wrath. Sometimes he parried an inconvenient question by the simple device of sitting in an attitude of Buddhist contemplation until the more impatient Western temperament would lead someone to put another question, whereupon the previous one would be forgotten. During the period of sharp fighting between Japanese and Soviet troops around the heights of Changkufeng in August, 1938, Kawai announced that the Japanese troops had withdrawn from a certain place.

"Withdrawn?" shouted the Tass correspondent, forgetting tact and English grammar in the excitement of the moment. "They was thrown back."

This would have provoked an explosion under Amau's regime. But Kawai merely laughed off the incident with the remark:

"You must be happy if that is what you think."

As regards censorship, with its adulteration of news at the source, Tokyo, as I found, offered far less ground for complaint than Moscow. I can recall only two occasions when my cable messages were stopped or deleted. One was the military uprising in the last days of February, 1936; the other was on the eve of the signature of the Anti-Comintern Pact, so spectacularly repudiated by Germany itself in 1939. In neither case was the censorship a permanent injury. I was able to write as much commentary and interpretation as I desired both on the uprising and on the pact.

Even after the outbreak of the war with China there was among Japanese no such atmosphere of terror, of fear at being seen with a foreigner as we had experienced among Russians during our last years in Moscow. One of my best informed Japanese friends did draw the line at political conversation in a crowded and popular foreign restaurant. But as soon as we adjourned to the Tokyo Club, where the food was much worse, but the opportunities for eaves-

dropping were more restricted, he was willing to talk with entire freedom.

Among our best friends in Tokyo was Baroness Shidzue Ishimoto, one of Japan's few emancipated women. The reforms for which she had worked—birth control, equal rights for women, international understanding—were not officially popular, but we were able to continue meeting her until the end of our stay in Japan without feeling that we were exposing her to the danger of being arrested. Anyone in Russia who was equally nonconformist as regards the existing order would certainly have been in a concentration camp.

The same comparison would hold good as regards the broader subject of political repression in general. The *Monitor* once asked me to write an article on Soviet and Japanese political trials and punishments. When one had said the worst that could fairly be said about Japan the comparison remained overwhelmingly unfavorable to the Soviet Union. A political execution in Japan is an extremely rare event. The only group execution I remember is that of some fifteen active participants in the February 26 uprising. As against this one may set the hundreds of executions which are reported every year in the Soviet Union. There are no concentration camps in Japan. And while Japanese police methods with political suspects are far from gentle, this is certainly equally true of police in all dictatorial states.

Japan's treatment of foreign journalists compares favorably with that of the European dictatorships. There is no long list of correspondents who have been expelled or blacklisted. To the best of my knowledge the only accredited representative of a foreign newspaper who has been barred from Japan on political grounds is Mr. A. Morgan Young, former correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* and editor of the *Japan Chronicle*, an English-language newspaper published in Kobe. Young's views, those of an old-fashioned liberal, closely coincided with my own, and I enjoyed his caustic, well written editorials immensely. The only mental reservation which I sometimes cherished was that, if Mr. Young had experienced more contact with European dictatorships, he might have given Japan a relatively more charitable rating.

But Morgan Young was a very healthy force in a country where the foreigner must always be on guard against hardening of the mental arteries. He once editorially advised the presumably amazed

and blinking Japanese censors to read Milton's "Areopagitica" every morning before breakfast. The Japanese police had a quaint way of tampering with the mails. Whenever a foreign newspaper or magazine printed something to which the authorities took exception one of two things would happen. Either the publication would be delivered with the offending article neatly clipped out or delivery would be delayed for a period that might range from six weeks to a year. Young never failed to report such delayed delivery in full detail with sarcastic speculation as to the cause of the delay and suggestions that a grave illegality had been committed. A good specimen of his hearty satirical style is the following excerpt (I think I quote it accurately from memory) from his book, "Japan Under Taisho Tenno":

Baron Sakatani, who had succeeded the bellicose Okuma as head of the Japan Peace Society, denounced the Government's conciliatory policy toward China, although there were no signs of any such policy.

I went to the Soviet Union with favorable prepossessions, which were completely reversed, so far as the dominant regime was concerned, by my experiences. I went to Japan without prepossessions at all, with only a very elementary and imperfect knowledge of the country's history and culture and economic and social system. I left it with a little more knowledge, I hope, but without any strong reaction, favorable or unfavorable.

At first I was afraid that I should find Tokyo rather dull. It was disconcerting to find that in some households no evening party was considered complete unless it included some guessing or spelling games. And of all the world's large capitals Tokyo is certainly one of the least stimulating, unless one possesses an intimate knowledge of Japanese language and culture. There is something stale and secondhand about living in an atmosphere of translation and interpretation, about not being able to pick up a book or magazine and read it for oneself. There is naturally no Western theater or opera in Tokyo, and the Japanese classical Kabuki stage, while fascinating as a spectacle of highly developed traditional art, was to me too exotic in psychology and plots to provide a permanent source of entertainment. The quality of musical performances in Tokyo was generally mediocre, especially after the Government, as a measure of war economy, refused to permit payments in foreign currency to visiting artists.

Still there were compensations, and I look back to the years in Tokyo as quite pleasant. The Japanese capital was well adapted for my two favorite sports—tennis and mountain walking. One could play tennis, as a rule, throughout the year, and I was a persistent player at the Tokyo Lawn Tennis Club, although I never rose above the lowest brackets in the quality of my game, which has always been a Fabian one of placement and accuracy without any great drive or speed. One of the most familiar figures on the courts was the genial veteran Belgian Ambassador, Baron de Bassompierre, whose full-throated shout, something like the cry of a wounded buffalo, whenever he missed a shot was a characteristic sound.

There was seldom a Sunday when I did not go out into the hills which are readily accessible from Tokyo. Sonya sometimes went with me; but her health was not very good in Tokyo, and I often walked out alone, stopping to eat lunch on some height which commanded a view of the white cone of Fuji. I usually took along with me a pocket-size book or a bundle of magazines and newspapers to read while resting. So Brailsford's biography of Voltaire and Maupassant's short stories are associated in my recollections with the lovely Izu Peninsula, one of the most unspoiled parts of Japan.

Here one could find scenes of the older simpler Japan which Lafcadio Hearn describes with such colorful sympathy: fishermen spreading out their nets to dry on sunny sandy beaches; little village shrines set among cool groves; grave dignified farmers saluting each other with the punctilio of old-fashioned Japanese courtesy. And all this against the natural background of a rugged broken coast line and a sea dotted here and there with bewitching little islands.

We spent summer vacations in Karuizawa, Japan's most popular hill resort. Some foreigners profess to dislike it because so many familiar faces from Tokyo are to be seen there again; but, as we spent most of our vacation days roaming the surrounding woods and hills (I think I could still return to Japan and find my way about almost anywhere within a radius of twenty miles of the village), the supposed strain of social life there did not affect us. It was a pleasant place, heavily wooded and refreshingly cool after the hot and steamy atmosphere of Tokyo. Its rainfall is heavy, even for Japan, which is one of the rainiest countries in the world; but I had become hardened to walking in the rain after once spending three weeks in the Bavarian Alps, during which there were only

four clear days. So, like my British namesake, I took my umbrella and walked out, regardless of the weather.

Our circle of friends, Japanese and foreign, gradually enlarged, and the normal placidity, verging on dullness, of Tokyo life was occasionally relieved by teapot tempests in the small foreign community. There was a furious row, mainly of feminine origin, in the diplomatic corps as to whether the counselor or first secretary of a small legation should take precedence over the naval or commercial attaché of a large embassy. The matter was finally referred to the august Baron de Bassompierre, who decided, according to protocol, in favor of the ranking official of the legation.

Religion was the subject of a mighty polemic, mainly among missionaries, when a high-church Episcopalian claimed the title of Catholic for his church in Karuizawa. He immediately came under a crossfire of attack from his fellow clerics. Protestants chided him for calling himself a Catholic while several Jesuit Fathers displayed prodigies of learning and quoted the original Latin of St. Augustine in an effort to prove that heretics always like to give themselves out as Catholics.

A controversy on a different plane broke out when a German Nazi protested violently in the *Japan Advertiser*, the most widely read foreign newspaper, because it had republished the comment of an American newspaper likening Herr von Ribbentrop's Nazi salute to King George to the kotow of a Zulu chieftain. As anti-Nazis considerably outnumbered Nazis among Tokyo foreigners there was a trickle of letters signed Zulu Chief, Zulu I, Zulu II, etc., all insisting that the comparison was highly injurious to the Zulus.

Another tempest of letters occurred when a Japanese, in a communication to the *Advertiser*, expressed the opinion that foreigners were profoundly immoral and were a menace to the morals of Japanese womanhood. This elicited various retorts about the yoshiwara, or highly organized Japanese system of licensed prostitution.

And there was the strange case of Mr. Rash Behari Bose, who was a thorn in the side of conservative Britons. Mr. Bose was a Hindu revolutionary who had fled to Japan after attempting to kill some high British official. He had been protected against extradition by the powerful Mitsuru Toyama, became a Japanese subject, and went about the country delivering lectures which painted British rule in India in far from flattering colors.

There was an organization, the British Association of Tokyo and Yokohama, headed by walrus-mustached "old Japan hands" which took on itself to bar the odious name of Mr. Bose from the public prints. If the *Japan Advertiser* printed a social note to the effect that Mr. Bose had gone to Osaka a delegation of outraged Britons would appear in its office, insisting that the Empire had been grievously insulted.

Some practical joker, tempted perhaps by the cannon-cracker effect of linking up Mr. Bose's name with the British Association, contrived to insert into the *Advertiser*, among innocent notes about Mrs. Smith giving a tea and Mr. Brown going to Karuizawa, an item of the following explosive contents:

Mr. Rash Behari Bose, distinguished Indian publicist and resident of Tokyo, recently delivered a lecture at the invitation of the British Association of Tokyo. His subject was: "Britain's Debt to India." An animated discussion followed the lecture.

Here was something that set the walrus mustaches wagging furiously, especially when two Japanese English-language newspapers innocently reprinted the item.

I found time for more reading in Tokyo than in Moscow, and my library grew until it overflowed my limited bookshelves. I wrote two books in Japan—one in 1936, the other in 1937. The first, entitled "Collectivism: A False Utopia," was a restatement of my old-fashioned liberal faith in politics and economics and a polemic against communism and fascism. It apparently fell rather flat in America; but an organization known as the Right Book Club circulated twenty thousand copies in a cheap edition in England.

One unforeseen result of the publication of "Collectivism: A False Utopia" was that I was deluged with letters from grieved and indignant followers of a cult which is sometimes called the Oxford Group Movement, but which I prefer to call Buchmanism, in deference to Oxford's historical cultural traditions. I had referred very briefly in my book to what I considered the "platitudes and puerilities" which the Buchmanites offered as a solution for the world's problems.

The primary argument employed in the letters which I received was the citation of testimonials, not unlike those which fashionably garbed society ladies give to Camel Cigarettes. See what Arch-



bishop X or Major General Y or Sir Osbaldistone Osbaldistone has to say about this marvelous new spiritual patent medicine. I must confess that this kind of approach always leaves me very unresponsive. My reaction to any idea or movement is based on my own judgment, not on the list of patrons or patronesses who may be mobilized.

And everything I have read of the writings and speeches of the Reverend Frank Buchman, his lieutenants and disciples convinces me that "platitudes and puerilities" was an accurate characterization of their theological and intellectual stock in trade. I continue to bracket Buchmanism with Bruce Barton's amazing effort to make over Jesus in the image of a hearty backslapping Rotarian. It is quite lacking, so far as I can judge, in those qualities which command respect in the historic faiths: depth of thought and feeling, genuine self-questioning and inner wrestling, rich aesthetic associations.

"Japan over Asia," my second book, was broadly similar in character to "Soviet Russia" and "Russia's Iron Age." My work for the *Monitor*, with its emphasis on the interpretative or descriptive article rather than on the more ephemeral news cable, fitted in quite smoothly with the preparation of such books. Before I wrote "Japan over Asia" I made several extended trips, which took me from foggy Hokkaido, northernmost of Japan's larger islands, to semitropical Formosa.

My first journey outside of Tokyo, which I made in company with Guenther Stein, was to Niigata Province. A rich rice-producing region, it was a provincial backwater, and one could find almost no one capable of speaking a foreign language, although here, as everywhere, Japanese children were taught English in elementary schools, which they promptly forgot afterwards. However, with the aid of a local Japanese-speaking German teacher, we moved about in the countryside, exchanged ceremonial bows with farmers, who entertained us with the peculiar Japanese green tea and sweetmeats, and got some idea of the ways of agricultural life, of the problems of rent and prices, and of the work of the Young Men's Association which is an important social force in the Japanese villages. It was somewhat reminiscent of communist and fascist youth organizations, taking the lead in such community activities as repairing roads and bridges, helping families where some able-bodied member had been called for military service.

One of my most interesting trips was to the northern regions

of the Japanese Empire, to Hokkaido, to Southern Sakhalin (the island which Japan shares with the Soviet Union), to the Tohoku, the northeastern part of Japan's Main Island, where poverty is chronically acute. The proverbially inquisitive and omniscient Japanese police, which let me alone except for two or three domiciliary visits in Tokyo, was very much on my trail in every town where I stopped. A Japanese companion who acted as interpreter bore the brunt of these contacts; as soon as we had settled down on the cushions of a Japanese inn he would be mysteriously called away, and no doubt his ingenuity was taxed to prove to the local guardians of the law that I was not a spy or bent on some sinister mission. As a transient visitor, happy, in this case, to be ignorant of the Japanese language, I bore up under this police curiosity without undue concern. But several priests whom I met, missionaries in small places where there were no other foreigners, had been reduced to a state bordering on nervous prostration by the constant badgering of the local police.

Not only is the climate of Hokkaido appreciably colder than that of other parts of Japan; the entire agricultural landscape is different, with dairy farms and machines which one almost never finds in the crowded rice fields of Japan Proper. Two impressions which I gained from this trip were the unwillingness of the Japanese to settle in a colder climate than the one to which they are accustomed (they are quite adaptable to warmer climates, such as Hawaii, the Philippines, and Brazil) and the efficiency of the monopolistic Oji Paper Company, which had built highly modern factories in some of the backwoods forest districts of the island.

Formosa, which I instinctively christened Japan's Treasure Island, was a good illustration of a small rich colony, efficiently developed. It supplies Japan with sugar, bananas, and citrus fruits. Japanese like to point to it as a sign of what they can ultimately achieve in Manchoukuo and north China. But of course there is no comparison between the overhead costs of occupation and administration and the capital required for development in small, easily governed Formosa and in the huge areas on the Asiatic mainland which have been brought under more or less effective Japanese control.

An important clue to understanding Japan, as I felt more and more during my residence there, is the family system, which, be-

sides helping to shape the Japanese personality, is of great importance in the country's industrial and military psychology. I found the average Japanese a rather flat personality, reluctant to express a positive opinion on any disputed question or to take an immediate decision. This, I became more and more convinced, is because big decisions in Japan from time immemorial have been collective affairs, the product of family councils. The head of the family possesses far greater authority, traditional rather than legal, than in a Western country. For instance, in America a marriage against parental objection is no serious matter. In Japan such a clash of wills is much more likely to lead to a single or double suicide.

At the same time the head of the family is supposed to be a benevolent steward for the interests of all its members. The circle of needy relatives who expect help of one kind or another widens in precise proportion as the prosperous Japanese acquires wealth. This sense of family responsibility has various social effects. It very largely takes care of Japan's unemployment problem. It also dries up very much the spirit of public benevolence which some wealthy men, especially in America, have displayed. There is a sense of strong solidarity within the typical Japanese family circle. There is little feeling for people who are outside it.

Now this family system affects other relations in Japanese life. An American army officer who had served as an observer with a Japanese regiment once remarked to me:

"It is remarkable how these people combine the strictest discipline in service with a kind of sentimental paternalism. The new recruit is regularly told that the company commander is his father and the sergeant is his mother. Imagine trying that kind of talk with a bunch of tough U.S. Marines. But it really seems to work here. The oldest officer in the regiment to which I was attached couldn't remember a court-martial, and the number of cases of drunkenness and disorderly conduct is negligible. A good deal of the captain's time, as he told me, was taken up with answering letters from the fathers of men under his command, asking him questions about everything under the sun, from how to pay off the mortgage on the farm to how to pick out a wife for the oldest son. And the worst punishment for a peasant recruit is for his officer to write to his father and tell him the boy isn't doing very well."

I was also struck by the attempt to apply this same idea of the

family system in industry. Girl workers in the Osaka textile mills which I visited received very low money wages, by Western standards. Their food and lodging, however, which they received free or at nominal charge, were probably superior to what they were accustomed to in the peasant homes from which most of them came; and the factory management tried to play up to the role of the benevolent parent by giving them courses in the Japanese genteel feminine arts of flower arrangement and tea ceremony. The former is an ingenious method of arranging flowers according to certain conventions. The latter is an elaborate method of serving small cups of very thick and bitter green tea to an accompaniment of a great many symbolic acts and gestures. Japanese life, incidentally, more than that of any people I know, is shot through with conventional and symbolic acts; I have sometimes thought that these serve as a substitute for creative and analytical thought, which is not a Japanese characteristic.

As I studied Japan more in life and in books I came to feel that it is of the greatest importance that this country never experienced a revolution from the bottom. Bismarck once said that in Prussia it is the kings who make revolutions. And Japan's greatest revolution, its transformation from a state of rigorous seclusion into one of eager adaptation of Western inventions and customs, extending even to frock coats and long dresses for Imperial receptions, was carried through in the name of the Emperor by the group (in Japan it is always "the group" rather than the individual that gets things done) of young clan leaders who wielded power in the name of the Emperor after the overthrow of the decadent Shogunate.

Finally—this is probably the point of greatest importance in trying to understand Japan's turbulent expansionism during the last decade—the country is terrifically overcrowded. I did not have to resort to vital statistics to find proof of this fact. Any walk through the country showed every bit of arable land cultivated. (A large part of Japan's area, incidentally, consists of steep mountain slopes and hillsides, unfit even for pasture because of the sharp bamboo grass which cuts the tongues of the animals.) The average peasant holdings are very small, about two or three acres of rice land, as I found out when I talked to the villagers with the aid of a Japanese interpreter. The countryside has pretty well reached its limit in supporting population; and every year there are a

million more Japanese, for whom work and food must be found.

Sometimes, when I read or hear an American denunciation of Japanese aggression as purely and only the result of a diabolical tenfold dose of original sin, I am tempted to try the experiment of fitting the shoe on the other foot. Suppose that we Americans numbered seventy millions and were obliged to live in an area about the size of California and, in some ways, less rich than California in natural resources. No matter what our economic system might be, capitalist, socialist, communist, fascist, or feudal-patriarchal, our standard of living would certainly be far lower than it is today. Our farmers, with vastly smaller holdings, would have to do without Ford cars and telephones. Our workers would have less to eat and wear. Our middle classes would have to dispense with iceless refrigerators and many other comforts and luxuries.

Now suppose that, because of our poverty and the lower living standards which it generated, we found ourselves systematically rejected as immigrants by wealthier countries. Suppose we found our goods, inevitably produced cheaply because of our low wage and salary scale, shut out or admitted in very limited quantities in many foreign markets.

To make the analogy with Japan complete, let us suppose that our nearest neighbor was a country much larger in area and population, rich in certain materials which would be useful for our economy, but inferior in military power and economic organization. Is it so certain, given our historical record of expansion at the expense of Indians who obligingly died off and Mexicans who were fortunately few, that we should resist the temptation to "assert our rights," or, in more realistic language, to pick quarrels with this weaker neighbor and to help ourselves to some of his coveted property? And how should we feel toward the richer powers which, after having already raised barriers against our emigrants and our goods, set out to block what we should, in all probability, consider a quite natural and legitimate process of expansion in our own part of the world?

This whole exposition, as I am quite prepared to concede, is one-sided, if only because it leaves out of account the country at the expense of which expansion is taking place. China has just as much right to existence as Japan. China is also desperately overcrowded and could make out just as good a case for surplus territory in which to settle its population as could Japan.

But it seemed to me worth while to state Japan's case, as it would have appeared to me, if I had been born a Japanese, because nations, even more than individuals, seldom show themselves capable of thinking in any but selfish terms. And these two factors of the steady upward curve of the Japanese birthrate and of Japan's military and industrial superiority to China lend an element of tragic inevitability to the great Far Eastern struggle which I witnessed in its first stages, and which is still far from ended.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: *Far Eastern Storm*

*From the time when I arrived* in Japan early in 1935 until the outbreak of war in the summer of 1937 the Far East lived under a constant shadow of impending Sino-Japanese conflict. The atmosphere was remarkably similar to that of Europe in 1938 and 1939. There were continual rumors of secret important conferences and decisions, of suspicious troop movements, of shipments of supplies and munitions. Many of these were doubtless false or exaggerated. But they reflected an accurate sense of tension. Whenever a Japanese was killed in China by a mob or an assassin, just as whenever a German or a Pole lost his life in a brawl at Danzig, one wondered whether this was the spark that would set off the explosion.

At the same time both sides displayed an Oriental fondness for maneuvering and delay, an unwillingness to assume the risks of a decisive struggle. There were moderates in both countries, elder statesmen and business men in Japan, political conservatives and men of property in China, who feared the ultimate consequences of a war and did what they could up to the end to prevent it. I often talked with representatives of both groups, who usually inserted, at the end of the talk, a request that they should not be quoted personally, for fear of the consequences at the hands of ardent self-styled patriots.

Japan's moderates foresaw a heavy strain on the national financial and economic resources, complications with foreign powers, an increase in social radicalism. China's moderates anticipated a terrific destruction of life and property, the interruption of a promising period of economic reconstruction, the loss—temporary, if not permanent—of some of China's largest cities and richest

provinces, the reappearance of the dreaded specter of communism.

Both sets of apprehensions were well justified. But the moderates were fighting for a losing cause. They were overborne in Japan by the militarists who believed that Manchuria should be only a steppingstone to new conquests. They were overborne in China by enthusiastic nationalists who were not only unwilling to yield an inch in north China, but looked forward to the recovery of Manchuria. The Far East was simply not big enough for the peaceful coexistence of two such dynamic and explosive forces as Japanese imperialism and Chinese nationalism.

I had very soon reached the conclusion, paradoxical as it may sound, that the best way to cover Japan journalistically was to spend a fair amount of time every year outside of the country, in other parts of the Orient and especially in China. I found that it was impossible in Tokyo to get an adequate idea of what the Japanese Army leaders on the continent were planning or of what the Chinese themselves were thinking and doing.

So my stay in Tokyo was broken by several long trips, which took me to many parts of China, from Peking to remote Yunnan Province, in the far Southwest. I also visited the Philippines, Malaya, and French Indo-China. When the war began I could view the course of hostilities through Chinese as well as through Japanese eyes.

I started my first Far Eastern trip with a visit to the country which I tactfully tried to call Manchoukuo when I was talking with Japanese and Manchuria when I was conversing with Chinese. The cruise from Kobe to Dairen, the gateway to Manchoukuo, was calm and restful; there were some beautifully shaped islands in the Inland Sea of Japan and off the coast of Korea. I read Stendhal's "The Red and the Black" in intervals of absorbing advance information on Manchoukuo from books and magazines. Henry W. Kinney, far and away Japan's most efficient "public relations counsel," who was just terminating his long period of service with the South Manchuria Railway to retire to a South Sea island, gave me a hospitable welcome in Dairen. A packet of letters of introduction to Japanese diplomats, generals, and business men assured me useful contacts, and I was careful to check on the naturally one-sided Japanese information by looking up representatives of foreign countries with experience in Manchoukuo.



In Manchoukuo, as in Japan, I found first impressions fairly reliable in the light of later experience and observation. I instinctively began to draw up a balance sheet of the strong and weak points of Japanese imperialism. On the credit side I placed a remarkable amount of new construction in the cities (Hsinking, the capital, was unrecognizable, with its wide boulevards and many new public buildings, by comparison with the sleepy little railway junction which I vaguely remembered from 1927, although, like most new capitals, it was fearfully overcrowded and looked as if it would be far from comfortable as a place to live in). There had been an impressive amount of new railway building since the Japanese occupation and a promising beginning with industrial development.

As against this I noticed an almost complete failure of attempts to settle Japanese on the land in large numbers, a conspicuous inability to win over the Chinese educated class (many of whom I later found as political refugees in Peking and other Chinese cities) and a chronic deficit in the Japanese budget. The supplementary military and administrative expenses in connection with Manchoukuo were just about the equivalent of the budget deficit until this rose to unprecedented proportions after the commencement of hostilities in China.

I am inclined to think that Manchoukuo would have been within the limits of Japan's digestive capacity, political and economic, if the advance had stopped there. China could not within any predictable future have recovered this territory by its own military effort, and no foreign power would have gone to war with Japan or even imposed economic sanctions on this issue. While the great majority of the population is racially Chinese, it consists largely of ignorant, destitute Shantung coolies, so accustomed to being misgoverned, robbed, starved, and generally maltreated by their Chinese overlords, both in Shantung and in Manchoukuo, that I doubt whether they would have ever risen up in mass insurrection against the more organized, bureaucratic, and efficient tyranny and exploitation of the Japanese.

I was closer to Russia during this trip in Manchoukuo than at any other time since leaving that country in 1934. Going to the frontier town of Manchouli in order to catch a glimpse of the negotiations which were in progress between Manchoukuo and Outer Mongolia, I was able to see Soviet territory from a height

near the town. There was really no "story" in the negotiations, which were largely concerned with the adjustment of the boundary between Mongolia and Manchoukuo, a scene of heavy fighting in 1939. The discussions broke off without any result; but it was amusing to see how the primary manipulators, Japan and the Soviet Union, pulled the strings that directed their respective marionettes, Manchoukuo and Outer Mongolia.

The obvious directing spirit of the Manchoukuo delegation was a Japanese named Kanki. A well educated man with a good knowledge of English, he was bored in the desolate frontier outpost of Manchouli and was very willing not only to give me his version of the negotiations, but also to accompany me on a few excursions around the town, of which the most interesting was to an encampment of Mongolian nomads. When I went to the railway cars where the Outer Mongolian delegates were lodged in an effort to obtain their opinion of the situation I was peremptorily ordered away by some very tough-looking Russian Gay-Pay-Oo agents, who seemed to be guarding the delegates in more than one sense. I doubt whether the counterrevolutionary reputation of the author of "Russia's Iron Age" had reached the frontiers of Outer Mongolia. The unwillingness of the Gay-Pay-Oo warders to allow the Mongols to talk was simply part of the general Soviet policy of keeping its Outer Mongolian colony hermetically sealed against all non-Soviet contacts.

I encountered a good deal of interest in Russian affairs when I interviewed General Jiro Minami, who combined the offices (which are suggestively always held by the same person, invariably a general) of Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung Army and Ambassador to Manchoukuo. Actually Minami, so far as I could learn, fulfilled the normal functions of the governor general of a colonial region. He was a man of considerable force of personality, with more views on political and economic questions than one is apt to find in the Japanese general, who is often a narrow specialist in his profession. I cannot, however, for a moment accept the bizarre theory, put forward in a recent book about Japan, that Minami is the "secret dictator" of the country. There is no such person.

After I had used up my allotted time in asking General Minami questions about Manchoukuo he expressed a desire to "interview" me about Russia and took up more time for this purpose than he had originally assigned for the entire meeting. He showed the

keenest interest not in military questions (on which he doubtless possessed his own private sources of information), but in communism as a political and economic system, and as an instrument of propaganda. His secretary later told me that Minami had given orders that a report embodying the gist of my Russian impressions should be drawn up and circulated among the officers of the Kwantung Army.

From Manchoukuo I proceeded to north and central China, to Peking and Tientsin, Nanking and Shanghai. At this time, and even after war had begun, one had remarkable facilities, thanks to the existence of neutral foreign concessions and settlements, for meeting spokesmen of both sides. With the aid of the seasoned correspondent H. J. Timperley, who was then sending messages from Peking to the *Monitor*, and who seemed to know practically everyone in Peking, and with the help of some of my numerous letters of introduction from Tokyo, I shuttled back and forth between Chinese and Japanese, with interludes of talk with more or less neutral foreigners.

I met Sung Che-yuan, then the Chinese political and military overlord of the Peking-Tientsin area. He was an old-fashioned Chinese general, which meant that he was a politician, administrator, financier, or what you will rather than a professional soldier. He declared himself loyal to the Chinese Government at Nanking, at the same time expressing a desire for friendly relations with Japan; and this was the policy which he tried to carry out until the two objectives became quite irreconcilable. Then, like the great majority of the Chinese war lords, he chose the Nationalist side.

I was impressed by Sung's soft white hands. They did not suggest a general who had seen a good deal of recent active service. And the contrast was rather pointed when shortly afterwards I met the trim taut General Hayao Tada, commander of the substantial garrison which Japan already maintained in north China, by virtue of the privilege which it enjoyed as one of the signatories of the Boxer Protocol. Tada, like every Japanese officer whom I have met (including several elderly retired generals), conveyed the impression of keeping himself extremely fit physically, prepared to leap into a hard campaign at a moment's notice.

In General Tada I soon recognized a dangerous type with which I had become only too familiar in Russia—the man with a fanatical

sense of mission. He harangued me at length on the deplorable misgovernment of China and on the immense improvement which would come about in the condition of the Chinese masses if China's leaders would only accept Japanese "co-operation," which was obviously a thinly veiled pseudonym for domination. He blamed the wicked Kuomintang for China's unaccountable unwillingness to fall in with this arrangement. The climax of his eloquence was reached when he declared:

"It is a question whether the Japanese Empire will prove weak and effete or whether it will fulfill its destiny: to bring peace and morals to China."

In the light of what happened shortly afterwards—the ravaging of almost every large Chinese city by air bombing, the scenes of rape and looting in Nanking and many other captured towns—there was a rather ghastly retrospective irony about this remark. But they were the general's own words, and the worst of it was that they were expressed with a sincere sense of conviction.

From General Tada's headquarters I went to Nankai University, where I met Dr. P. C. Chang and a number of other Chinese who were on its faculty. The well educated Chinese, whose forbears have often been Confucian mandarins and scholars for centuries, is an extremely high intellectual type. (This observation does not apply, one may note, to many of the half-baked semi-westernized Chinese who have picked up a smattering of Western ideas in mission schools and colleges.) I spent hours at Nankai, discussing the outlook for ultimate successful Chinese resistance and also delving into the stores of information on Chinese economics which were available at the university. As a stronghold of Nationalist spirit Nankai was especially obnoxious to the Japanese military leaders. It was first bombed and then burned down after the fighting began in north China. Its valuable library was destroyed; but most of its professors and many of its students migrated to the other end of China. I found it carrying on as a "university in exile" in Kunming, in remote Yunnan Province, in 1939.

Sonya had joined me in Peking, and we traveled on together to Nanking, the Nationalist capital. On the way we passed through a huge flooded area, where trees and housetops grotesquely protruded from a sea of water that had formed when the obstreperous Yellow River burst through its dikes. Here was one of China's epic calamities. The Yellow River was popularly known as China's

Sorrow, and the sight of the flooded plains and villages from the raised railway embankment on which our train proceeded was a grim object lesson in one of China's major social problems: a population so tightly packed and so close to the subsistence level that the least disturbance was certain to cause widespread loss of life. And the system of local administration was so imperfect that the breaking of dikes, followed by large floods, was almost an annual occurrence.

Viewed with memories of the inchoate China which I had seen in 1927, Nanking, with its large Government buildings, its new residential quarters, its uniformed policemen, was impressive. In 1927 there had been a sense of impermanence about every Chinese government institution. Even Chiang Kai-shek did not seem securely entrenched in power. Now one felt in Nanking that the new Nationalist regime, with all its weaknesses and imperfections, had come to stay.

My most interesting conversation in Nanking was with Dr. V. K. Ting, distinguished geologist and president of the Academia Sinica, a scientific research institution. About Dr. Ting's specialty I knew about as much as the late William Jennings Bryan; but he was a man of catholic mind and wide interests, a confidential adviser of Chiang Kai-shek and an excellent spokesman for the new Chinese nationalism. We first became involved in a friendly argument over the respective merits of democratic and authoritarian systems. Dr. Ting maintained that there was more good than I was willing to concede in communism and in fascism. Democracy and individualism, he maintained, were luxuries in which only wealthy countries could afford to indulge.

My reply was that it was just because countries like the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands had given free play to individual initiative that they had become relatively rich. I went over the same round of argument, with the same inconclusive result, three years later with the most extreme member of the Japanese diplomatic corps, Mr. Toshio Shiratori, who was just about to leave to take up his new post as Ambassador to Italy.

Dr. Ting then gave a remarkably accurate forecast of Chinese strategy in the event of the war with Japan which he considered almost inevitable.

"We shall lose the large cities, the ports, the Yangtze River towns that are within range of Japanese warships," he began. "That will

be our penalty for not having set about building a modern navy.”

Chinese intellectuals, always profoundly conscious of their country's long history, often display a philosophic impassivity in discussing immediate losses and disasters which Occidentals would scarcely imitate. I could not imagine a Frenchman conceding the loss of Paris or an American foreseeing the surrender of New York and Boston as calmly as Dr. Ting wrote off Peking and Shanghai, Nanking and Hankow.

“But the war will not be over when the Japanese have occupied what they can occupy in our huge country,” he continued. “We shall retire into Szechuen, into our great undeveloped West. When the Japanese try to pursue us there it will be their destruction.

“But suppose they refuse to pursue you,” I suggested. “Suppose they sit down in the occupied territory, exploit and develop it and defy you to put them out. Suppose they challenge you to a contest in waiting.”

“Very well,” replied Dr. Ting in his level voice. “We can wait too. And time will be on our side. Our capacity for sabotage and passive resistance is unrivaled. They will get little out of the regions which they may hold. And they are certain to become involved in quarrels with foreign powers. This will also help our cause.”

I think we anticipated pretty accurately the actual course of events in the future war; and the endurance contest which we both foresaw is still going on.

From this first trip to China I brought back the impression that war between Japan and China might be a matter of months or of years, but could hardly be staved off altogether. As Dr. Hu Shih, the subsequent Chinese Ambassador to the United States, said to us when we were gathered around the fire in Timperley's comfortable house in Peking:

“The question is quite simple. There is no limit to Japanese appetite. There is a limit to Chinese patience.”

When I went to China again in the following year I found the Chinese more self-assured and the Japanese more hesitant. There had been several murders of Japanese in various parts of China, and no punitive reprisals had followed. The Chinese had fought back with some success when Mongols, incited by the Japanese, had started a miniature war in Suiyuan Province. Was it possible that Japan was only a bluffer, a giant with clay feet? I did not believe this myself. The Japanese Army, once it had decided to act,

could deal some smashing blows; but the blows were to fall only in the following year.

In the course of this trip I made my first tour of southeastern Asia, the Philippines, Malaya, Siam, Indo-China, Hongkong and Canton. Everywhere I was impressed by two closely related phenomena: the fear of Japan and the tendency to build up armaments. A conscript army was being formed in the Philippines under the direction of the flamboyant American General Douglas MacArthur, whose conversational manner suggested a stump speaker addressing a large mass meeting. The President of the Philippine Commonwealth, Manuel Quezon, who also possessed a taste for the flamboyant, had given MacArthur the resounding title of Field Marshal of the Philippine Army.

This force was obviously created with one enemy in view, Japan. I could not altogether share General MacArthur's optimism about the strong defensive position of the Philippines after the withdrawal of American aid. For, while it is true that there are few places suitable for landing operations and that some of the jungle regions of the islands, with their luxuriant vegetation, are well adapted for guerrilla warfare, a Japanese attack would enjoy the immense advantage of overwhelming superiority on sea and in the air.

President Quezon, whose quick, agile mind and nervous mercurial temperament reminded me strongly of Eugene Chen, although he possessed more than Chen's share of executive ability, had just returned from a trip to China at the time of my visit. In an interview he spoke hopefully of the new spirit of nationalism and discipline in China. No doubt he has been anxiously following the course of the present struggle in China, for the maintenance of Philippine independence will depend very much on Japan's relative strength in 1946, when the American connection comes to an end.

The Philippines proved interesting for other reasons besides the overhanging shadow of Japan. The islands provided my first introduction to the tropics, with their violent storms, damp heat, luxuriant vegetation, and omnipresent swarming ants; and I was fascinated by the double overlay, Spanish and American, on the primitive culture of the Filipino Malay tribes. This is mirrored in almost every Philippine town, with its massive Spanish cathedral and patio, or public square, in close proximity to an American mov-

ing picture theater and quick-lunch restaurant, with the American school perhaps around the corner.

I have never been in South America; but I imagine that the Spanish-Malay pattern is not unlike the Spanish-Indian. So long as America maintains its present virtual protectorate the forms of the made-in-America constitution of the Philippine Commonwealth will be observed. But if and when the American link is severed I think the familiar Latin American methods of the coup and the pronunciamiento will bulk larger than the traditions of the New England town meeting.

A very active and hospitable Manila journalist, Juan Orendain, helped me to get acquainted with a wide circle of representative Filipinos. I have an especially pleasant recollection of the Minister of Labor, Señor Torres, who took me through some of the worst slums in the city and explained his Ministry's plans for combating this and other social evils.

Japan again loomed large on the horizon when I spent Christmas in the sweltering heat of Singapore. The British military and naval authorities were very considerate and gave me all facilities for seeing the great naval base which was nearing completion on the opposite side of the island from the port. The huge dry dock, capable of servicing the largest ship afloat, the floating dock, the numerous warehouses and oil tanks, all built up on what had been a jungle swamp, constituted an impressive sight. No doubt the Japanese Navy, with its ubiquitous spy system, knew about these installations, although a Japanese journalist would scarcely have been a welcome visitor and a prominent Japanese business man in Singapore had recently committed suicide when he was implicated in some compromising espionage activity.

But there was one conspicuous lack at Singapore, of which the Japanese Navy was equally well aware. There were practically no warships there. Until Great Britain is able to maintain a substantial fleet at Singapore its effort to hold its own in the rough-and-tumble game of Oriental power politics is certain to be attended with difficulties.

From Singapore I traveled up the Malay Peninsula to Bangkok, the capital of Siam. Usually I reduced sight-seeing to a minimum in these journalistic trips. But Bangkok, with the extraordinary architectural style, at once gorgeous and garish, of its temples and palaces, with their fantastic shapes and bright varied colors stand-



ing out sharp and clear against the southern sun, with its amphibian population, so many of whom live on the picturesque, mosquito-infested canals of the city, was irresistible. Because of pressure of time I missed the opportunity of seeing the resurrected ancient city of Angkor, across the border of French Indo-China, and this is something which I have always regretted. I expected to return to this part of Asia, but circumstances made this impossible and I received an object lesson in the folly of sacrificing a present opportunity for a future possibility.

Siam, under the rule of an energetic group of young military officers and civilian officials who had toppled over the mild and sleepy despotism which had formerly prevailed, was also caught up in the general fever of arming. New airplanes droned over the temples and canals of Bangkok and a number of small warships had been ordered in Japan, where Siamese naval cadets were being sent for training. Like every newcomer in Bangkok I asked about the persistent rumor of a Japanese-constructed canal across the narrow isthmus of Kra, which was supposed to be a means of short-circuiting Singapore. I soon became convinced that the canal was as mythical as the traditional sea serpent.

At the same time it was quite evident that Japan was making every effort to promote its trade in Siam, to establish an air line to that country, to establish all sorts of "cultural" contacts. Wedged in between two large British and French colonies, Malaya and Indo-China, Siam occupies an important strategic position and doubtless figures in the periodic staff talks between British and French officers on the problems of defense against a possible Japanese southward thrust. But Siam, a country almost without roads, although it possesses a surprisingly good railway system, and with a backward, sleepy-looking country population, tending its water-buffaloes and leading a life suggestive of Kipling's *Jungle Books*, does not convey the impression of possessing great possibilities as an aggressor in the event of war. Japanese air and submarine bases in the country would, of course, be a nuisance in the event of a war with Great Britain and France in the South Pacific.

Although Siam is quite conscious of its new nationalism (the latest manifestation of which was to change the name of the country to Thailand) and is impatient of any signs of foreign tutelage, it still retains a few foreign advisers, British, French, and American, in its Ministries. Some of these advisers helped me a good

deal in my effort to gain some idea of the politics and economics of an exotic country during a short visit.

A conspicuous exception in this connection was the British Minister to Siam, whose name, as I recall it, was Sir Josiah Crosby. Very short, very stout, and very pompous, he had lived in Siam for some thirty years and conveyed a strong suggestion of the oversized frog in the small pond. My credentials of introduction to His Excellency were sufficiently valid to induce him to receive me. But his whole manner during the interview indicated that he regarded all "pressmen," except possibly correspondents of the *Times* (of London), as troublesome intruders; and his replies to questions represented a far from brilliant or adroit effort to say nothing at all. No doubt we were equally satisfied when the talk came to an end.

Indo-China was the next country on my route. I have never seen such abundant wild life, and especially such a variety of birds as I noticed on my trip across Cambodia, the southwestern province of Indo-China. Here one was also impressed by the colorful native costumes, the many Buddhist priests in yellow robes, the collections of fine filigree work in silver and bronze found in the museums.

The Popular Front in France had elicited repercussions in this remote colony. There had been a wave of strikes and demonstrations, which, however, subsided as soon as the colonial administrators were again given a free hand and were assured that some exuberant speeches of Socialist Ministers about native rights were not to be taken too seriously. In Indo-China, as elsewhere, one found mounting expenses for military, aviation, and naval needs. But the Japanese commercial penetration, the flooding of markets with cheap textiles and other manufactures, so evident in the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, and Malaya, was not to be found in Indo-China. The French tariff and quota walls were too steep to be scaled.

From Indo-China I sailed northward to Hongkong. This distant and exposed outpost of the British Empire, this huge rock jutting up so picturesquely out of an incredibly blue sea, is always a most vivid memory because I spent there some of the harassed days of the first great war scare of September, 1938. At the time of this first visit, early in 1937, there was no thought of European war. Japan and China were still at peace. But an atmosphere of nervousness

was already perceptible. The garrison was being increased; residents of the Colony spoke of stumbling on new gun emplacements in unsuspected places. It was both pathetic and ironical to see an announcement of the following subject for a sermon in one of the Hongkong churches:

“War is not something unavoidable; it is a sin against God and man.”

Returning to Japan, I found the country in a state of discontent and political ferment. Some unusually bold speeches against the Army and its claims to dictate policy had been uttered in the Diet. The War Minister had taken offense, and a Cabinet crisis (always easy to arouse in Japan, where Cabinets are usually short-lived) had occurred, ending in the resignation of Premier Hirota. Contributing causes of unrest and discontent were the increased taxes on tobacco and other articles of general consumption and new restrictions on foreign trade and transfer of currency.

It was at this time that the elder statesmen close to the Emperor made their last effort, prior to the outbreak of the war in China, to curb the Army. At their suggestion the Emperor commissioned General Kazushige Ugaki, who had the reputation of being politically moderate, to form a Cabinet. All the articulate elements in Japanese public life, with one exception, were in favor of Ugaki: the political parties, the business interests, the press. But the exception, the Army High Command, was decisive. The military leaders vetoed Ugaki's appointment, and this was sufficient to block it, because the War Minister in a Japanese Cabinet must be a general in active service; and so strong is the corporate spirit in the Japanese Army that no general will accept office without the approval of his colleagues.

It is conceivable, although by no means certain, that Ugaki as Premier would have been able to stave off the Sino-Japanese war. But there was no opportunity to try out this experiment. Ugaki appeared on the political scene again in 1938 when he became Foreign Minister as a result of a reorganization of the Konoye Cabinet. Again his name was associated with a tendency toward moderation. But, as an American diplomat remarked, he was “hogtied” by the militarists. When he made the mild gesture of holding talks with the British Ambassador, Sir Robert Craigie, there was an outcry against him among the extreme nationalists and his life was threatened. He soon resigned his office and is only likely to

enter political life again if there is a very drastic change in the trend of Japanese foreign policy.

As sometimes happens there was a last period of calm before the outbreak of the irrepressible storm. General Senjuro Hayashi, a veteran soldier with enormous mustaches and a minimum of political ideas, took over the office of Premier. By one of those curious accidents that sometimes happen in Japanese politics he selected a very liberal Foreign Minister, Naotake Sato, who had been Ambassador to France and was impregnated with the spirit of Briand and the League of Nations. Sato did what he could to ease Sino-Japanese tension; but his contribution was necessarily limited to conciliatory speeches. The clash between Japanese imperialism and Chinese nationalism, as I had felt again and again, was too fundamental to be warded off.

The actual beginning of the war that was to involve a quarter of the human race, and to introduce remote primitive Chinese villages to such gifts of science as high explosive bombs, came about rather suddenly. It spoiled my annual summer vacation in the cool hills around Karuizawa. I had breathed a sigh of personal relief when an unusually serious Soviet-Japanese conflict over a couple of deserted islets in the Amur River had ended with Soviet withdrawal from the disputed territory. Then, just as I was about to leave Tokyo, came the ominous report of prolonged fighting between Japanese and Chinese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge, near Peking. Later reports indicated conferences and possibilities of adjustment, so I joined Sonya at the resort, which was between three and four hours from Tokyo by train. But on the day after my arrival came the fateful announcement of the decision of the Japanese Cabinet to send reinforcements to China. This looked like war and I took the next train back to Tokyo and resigned myself to brief week-end holidays. For three weeks the issue of war or peace hung in the balance. The perplexity of journalistic observers was admirably caricatured by "Sapajou," the brilliant Russian cartoonist of the *North China Daily News*, leading English-language newspaper in Shanghai. He showed two newspapermen standing before a barometer labeled "North China Political Weather" and musing as follows: "Maybe Rain, maybe Snow, maybe Yes, maybe No."

This was a good hit at the myth of journalistic omniscience. Newspapermen, like diplomats, possess the advantage of being pro-

fessionally close to history in the making; but neither journalists nor diplomats nor radio commentators nor any other human species can do more than guess more or less intelligently about events which are still in the future. Indeed the healthiest agnostic among diplomats or journalists is the one who probably makes the fewest mistakes.

I was again in Karuizawa during a period of comparative calm when a *gogai*, or Japanese newspaper extra, was shouted about in the streets. It was the first time that an extra had ever reached the resort, and exciting news, under the circumstances, was not likely to be good. With the aid of our Japanese maid we deciphered the puzzling hieroglyphics of the newspaper sheet. Japanese airplanes had dropped bombs on Chinese troops which, so the Japanese version ran, had treacherously attacked a small party of Japanese soldiers at Langfang, in north China. This looked like the decisive turn of events. I relayed a message to Boston by telephoning to Tokyo and returned in time to report, from the Tokyo end, the first big act of war, the Japanese occupation of Peking and Tientsin.

War in China is very different from war in Europe. In Europe sweeping mobilization precedes the actual crossing of the frontier, which is the first act of war. And it is taken for granted that the crossing of a frontier means a fight to the finish. In China there was an indecisive pause of more than two weeks after the occupation of Peking and Tientsin until the outbreak of large-scale fighting at Shanghai indicated that the Far East was to experience a major war. The tremendously increased risks of modern warfare for noncombatants were brought home to us with painful vividness when we learned that Robert Reischauer, son of our next-door neighbor in Karuizawa, had been killed by one of the bombs which inexperienced Chinese aviators dropped in the heart of the crowded International Settlement. Reischauer was only passing through Shanghai with a party of foreign visitors to the Orient. His father, Dr. A. K. Reischauer, was a veteran Presbyterian missionary educator and the author of an excellent work on Japanese Buddhism.

The wartime Tokyo of 1937 was very different from the wartime Paris that I was to know in 1939. The war seemed very far away; there was no question of gas masks or air-raid shelters. There was no rush of women and children to the relative security of country districts. Daily life went on much as before, except, of

course, for the men who were mobilized and sent to the various China fronts.

It was in the railway stations that one was most aware of the existence of a war. Both in Tokyo and in small towns one saw the same scenes, only varying in the number of participants: groups of friends, of members of patriotic societies, of school children, shouting banzais and waving flags in a steady rhythm as a greeting to the departing soldiers. A curious touch of old superstition reappeared with the beginning of the hostilities. This was the knitting of "thousand-stitch" loincloths for soldiers. Women would stand on the main streets and ask each passing woman for an additional stitch; the figure of one thousand was supposed to bring immunity from wounds and death.

It was after the outbreak of the war that I had some of my most interesting contacts with Japanese of the extreme nationalist type who usually hold aloof from foreigners. At first I had been rather baffled as to how to meet these Japanese, whose influence on the course of events was obviously strong, but who did not frequent the Tokyo Club, modeled very much along English lines, and other places where foreigners and Japanese liberals forgathered.

Finally, however, I more or less stumbled on two intermediaries who seemed to possess access to Japanese military and nationalist circles. One was a veteran Japanese journalist who had spent many years in Russia before the Revolution, with whom I used Russian as a common language. The other was a young member of a small Japanese political party which followed the leadership of a would-be Führer named Seigo Nakano. With their aid I met one well known nationalist after another: General Matsui, later the conqueror of Shanghai and Nanking; General Araki, former War Minister and sponsor of a cult of nationalism so esoteric that even Japanese could not altogether understand it; General Hayashi, former Premier; Admiral Nakamura, reported to be one of the Navy's "brain trust"; and Mitsuru Toyama, the Nestor of the ronin, or restless extremists, who were in the habit of throwing bombs or firing bullets at anyone whom they suspected of undue liberalism or wavering in the nationalist faith.

There was nothing to suggest violence in the patriarchal white-bearded personality of Toyama when I talked with him over the hibachi (charcoal stove), which communicated very little heat to the simple reception room of his Japanese house on a chilly

Tokyo winter day. Sitting cross-legged, clad in a coarse Japanese kimono, he replied to questions with the cryptic mysticism of a Delphic oracle. It was interesting to see the group of retainers who came to pay their respects to him, each being sent away with a word of advice or a note of introduction. One of them had the amusing word "uplifter" printed on his card in English. Toyama, whose name was rightly or wrongly associated with half a dozen political attacks and assassinations, talked mostly in Buddhist platitudes about the desirability of peace and harmony. But when I touched on one of his favorite subjects, Japanese sympathies with Asiatic peoples under foreign rule, he frankly declared that the time would come when Japan would send troops to support uprisings of these peoples against their foreign rulers.

General Matsui, who was a very slight man weighing perhaps a hundred pounds, with an amazingly deep voice, looked, despite his age of more than sixty years, as if he would be a very hard opponent in a wrestling or jujitsu match; he also expounded Japan's Pan-Asian dream. Like many other military men, he was obsessed with the idea that the world should be divided into three compartments: Asia for the Asiatics, Europe for the Europeans, and America for the Americans. I never obtained from Toyama, Matsui, or any other Pan-Asian advocate a satisfactory explanation of the dilemma involved in the fact that Japan, while posing as the champion of the rights of the Eastern peoples, was simultaneously crushing and assigning to a definitely inferior status the Koreans, Formosans, Manchurians, and Chinese in those parts of Asia which were under Japanese sway. But the Japanese are, I think, deficient in the gifts of analysis and logic, and of course Western imperialism has its full share of hypocrisies and inconsistencies.

General Sadao Araki, a warrior with the sensitive face of a poet, was one of the most interesting Japanese nationalist personalities. I called on him several times in his modest Japanese house (I never met a Japanese general who conveyed the impression of being a wealthy man), decorated with an old suit of chain-mail armor, such as Japanese samurai wore in the Middle Ages, with Chinese prints of the tiger, Araki's favorite animal, and with one or two certificates marking phases in his military career. My Japanese interpreter faltered sometimes on the ground that the general's philosophy was too abstruse to be rendered in English. I gathered, however, that Araki, who had been sent abroad on missions to England, Germany,

and Russia before and during the World War, objected to Western legalism and formalism and cherished an idealized conception of Japan as a country where the people simply fulfilled the will of a benevolent paternal Emperor without external compulsion. His experiences in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution had made him a passionate anti-Communist. I asked him whether Japan, like Russia, might succumb to communism if it should become involved in a prolonged war.

"No," Araki replied. "Our people are morally stronger than the Russians. If we should experience a revolution it would be a good one, not a bad one, like the Russian."

This sounded interesting, and I tried to find out what was Araki's formula for a "good" revolution; but he took refuge in cloudy generalities.

When I obtained interviews with high military and naval dignitaries I could not always resist the temptation to put inconvenient questions to them. So I asked Admiral Nakamura, a senior officer in the Japanese naval service, what Japan would do if it were compelled to fight the combined American and British navies.

"We have considered such a contingency, and our plans are made," he replied. "Of course I cannot tell you what these plans are. But we are confident that we could meet such a situation successfully."

An element in Japan's expansionist psychology that should not be underrated is the widespread conviction, born of a series of relatively easy and victorious wars (the Russo-Japanese War was the sole serious test of the national strength), that Japan cannot be beaten. Only a few of the most Westernized Japanese really believe, in their hearts, that their country could be defeated, no matter how heavy are the odds against it.

My trips to China naturally became still more informative after the war had begun. I saw Peking twice under Japanese rule and struggled hard to get a reasonably accurate picture of the situation by talking with Japanese spokesmen, such Chinese as still remained in the old capital, foreign diplomats, and independent observers, among whom I always found Dr. Leighton Stuart, President of Yenching University, most fair and extremely well informed. My final impression (my last visit to Peking was early in 1939) was that the Japanese grip on most of north China was too strong to be broken. Although the Chinese guerrillas were numer-



ous, they seemed to be a nuisance rather than a serious menace to the Japanese, except in Shansi Province, where the mountainous character of the country was a natural aid and the Communist Eighth Route Army had given the peasants valuable training in irregular tactics. But in general, except in Shansi, the guerrillas were not causing enough damage to force a Japanese withdrawal; and it seemed probable to me that the people of north China would gradually adjust themselves to the Japanese domination, just as their ancestors had accepted the rule of invading Mongols and Manchus. On the other hand, the large-scale economic enterprises on which Japan is counting in order to reap material rewards from the war could not, I believed, be undertaken until the country was more effectively pacified and until Japan was able to spare more capital from its war outlay.

Shanghai was a regular port of call on all my trips in China and I liked the city better when I was not living there continuously. The numerous eccentrics and mild lunatics in its foreign colony, then a bore and an irritation, were now a source of amusement. And Shanghai offered a more varied and cosmopolitan group of foreigners than one could find in Tokyo.

Two personalities whom I came to appreciate very much were "Sapajou," the Russian cartoonist of the *North China Daily News*, and Lee Choy, veteran Chinese journalist and member of the Kuomintang who had always refused offers of government office and lived in a hermit office amid an indescribable clutter of old newspapers. Sapajou, whose real name was Sapojnikov, would have been a great actor, I am sure, if he had not been a great artist. His mimicry was as good as his sketches. I always saw something of the mordant quality of the character sketches of Gogol's "Dead Souls" in Sapajou's pen sketches of Far Eastern Babbitts, resident and transient. His ideas for political cartoons were also strikingly apt. Russia was a common theme, especially as we were both honest members of the "anti-Comintern front." I spent several very pleasant evenings with Sapajou and a few of his Russian friends in Shanghai.

Lee Choy had a singularly acute and penetrating mind, a lively wit, and that peculiarly Chinese intellectual gift of taking the long view, of seeing contemporary events in the perspective of decades or even of centuries. I placed him immediately in my rather limited album of first-rate Oriental individualities along with Lin

Yutang, Hu Shih, and two Japanese whom I had found very congenial, Toshi Go of the South Manchuria Railway and a very thoughtful and well informed journalist named Fukuoka.

I found another candidate for this album when I visited Kunming, capital of remote Yunnan Province, shortly before leaving the Far East altogether in February 1939. This was Dr. T. Y. Lin, former professor at Nankai University and editor of its excellent economic quarterly. When I say that Dr. Lin was the highest type of Chinese intellectual, I can think of no higher praise, for there is no Oriental mentality which, at its best, is so profound and so subtle as the Chinese. Dr. Lin and his American wife, a graduate of the University of California, were overwhelming in their hospitality and showed me more of the political and economic "sights" of Kunming than I could have seen in weeks if I had been left to my own resources. It was wonderfully refreshing, after a long and fatiguing trip which had brought me all the way from Manchoukuo to Yunnan, to discuss with Dr. Lin the theories of communism and fascism and the philosophy of Nietzsche, along with the current problems of the war against Japan.

It was both touching and heartening to find Chinese research students making shift with all sorts of crude substitutes for proper apparatus and equipment in the emergency laboratories which had been hastily rigged up in Kunming for the benefit of half a dozen Chinese universities which had moved to this relatively safe place (although it has been subjected to a few air raids) from cities under Japanese occupation. There could be no better use, I should think, for an academic philanthropic grant than the purchase of books and implements for the use of the thousands of Chinese students and professors who have migrated to the primitive provinces of the West and Southwest, where they hope to maintain a free China.

Kunming presented some amazing contrasts between the backwardness of the past and planning for the future. One stepped off a street where jostling rickshaw coolies invoked unprintable curses on one another's mothers and found oneself in the company of a group of educated refugees who were discussing in flawless English the latest news from Europe or some complicated problem of prices and exchange. Airplanes circled over the city where even the rickshaw was a modern innovation, replacing the traditional sedan chair. The sleepy opium-smoking Yunnanese trader or handicraftsman could see new factories going up on the outskirts of the city,

partially equipped with machinery salvaged from Japanese-occupied areas.

I made this last trip in China with a view to taking away from the Orient a final impression of the balance of strength as between Japan and China. I carried away a strong feeling that it was almost misleading to use the term "war" in connection with the Sino-Japanese conflict in its present phase. I found no regular fronts, no decisive battles or campaigns, no key points at which either side was aiming. What was taking place and what may last for many years and go through many phases of transformation was a contest in national endurance, in which the financial and economic aspects were as important as the military.

When Japanese airplanes destroyed stocks of imported oil behind the Chinese lines it was a score for Japan. When Chinese guerrillas wrecked a Japanese train or tore up rails it was a victory for China. When Japan obtained control of the bills of exchange for Chinese goods which were being exported to foreign countries this was as significant as a military advance. And it was a triumph for China when some new means of exporting goods through regions not under Japanese control was discovered.

There is enough spirit of passive resistance in China to keep the Nationalist regime in the interior functioning for years. There is not, I think, enough will for aggressive fighting to drive the Japanese out of what they hold. It may be that the ultimate issue will depend on whether Japan becomes involved in war with one or more important foreign powers. Amid much that is uncertain in this Far Eastern struggle one prediction seemed reasonably safe to me as I studied my notes and sorted out my observations during the long cruise from Indo-China back to Tokyo. There will be no sudden spectacular ending of the war, no armed clash that can claim a place among the ten or twenty "decisive battles of history."

I was delayed in returning to Tokyo and barely had time, with the help of some of our friends, to pack up, liquidate our house and board the *Empress of Canada*, with Elizabeth as a companion, for the voyage across the Pacific, which was to be the first lap of our journey to Paris. Sonya had left earlier, in order to receive urgent medical treatment in America.

Our trip was broken by a day in Honolulu, where I met old friends, Klaus Mehnert, a young Russian-born German who had spent some years in Moscow as a correspondent, and his American

wife. Elizabeth's fondness for publicity (she was always exultant when our names, especially hers, appeared in the "Social and General" column of the *Japan Advertiser*) was gratified at Honolulu when a photographer, hard up for subjects, took our pictures for one of the local newspapers. I think she was the most homesick of the three of us after leaving Japan. She had come to like the highly cosmopolitan American School of Tokyo, which enrolled children of almost all peoples and races, from the sons of the Afghan Minister to the children of German "non-Aryan" business men; she was able to chatter fluently in Japanese, and she liked nothing so much as to go about in our neighborhood in the full Japanese costume of kimono and geta, or wooden shoes.

Some of my friends and acquaintances anticipated that my departure from Japan would be the prelude to another book, more critical than "Japan over Asia." But my reasons for leaving Japan were quite different from those which induced me to quit Moscow. My first consideration was Sonya's health, which had suffered in the Japanese climate. Then I found life in Tokyo, while pleasant and leisurely enough, far from stimulating intellectually.

I considered as a personal warning the example of some foreign "old-timers" both in Japan and in China who were showing symptoms of hardening of the mental arteries. One such symptom was succumbing to what the psychologists call total recall in the matter of personal reminiscences and spinning uncommonly long-winded yarns. And I frankly confess to a feeling of nostalgia for Europe. Even the sight of a Vienna station in a moving picture film was enough to inspire a yearning for the old continent to which I felt I owed 90 per cent of the civilized side of my life.

I suppose I should have felt more righteous indignation against Japan than I did. What the Japanese were doing on the continent, trying to shoot and bomb the Chinese into subjection, was only too reminiscent of the Soviet dictatorship, shooting and starving its recalcitrant subjects. But one's emotional reactions are not always subject to pure logic.

I can, however, recognize three reasons why I left Tokyo without the polemical bitterness of spirit with which I looked back, and still look back on the Stalinite dictatorship in Russia. The first, which explains the absence of any disposition to write a second, more critical book, is that I experienced no such repression in my journalistic work in Japan as I had encountered in Russia. There

was nothing to compare with the surveillance of the Gay-Pay-Oo. There was no essential situation in Japan that I was restrained from describing by censorship. There was no jealous withholding of a return visa when one left the country. Consequently there were no compulsorily unwritten stories which I felt an impulse to publish after departing from Tokyo.

The Japanese are far less cruel to one another than are Soviet Russians. Even during the war nothing like a normal Soviet peacetime quota of arrests and executions was ever reached in Japan. None of my Japanese friends were spirited away to concentration camps. There were no fraudulent sabotage trials. In the one case when there were a number of executions, after the military uprising of February 26, 1936, the case against the accused was stated fairly and objectively, even to the point of admitting that they acted with idealistic motives. There was no lying slander about how the men who had been shot were really paid agents of foreign powers, such as would certainly have characterized such a case in the Soviet Union. There is an underlying streak of gentlemanliness about the Japanese, gravely impaired, to be sure, during the last decade of violence and brutality. But it still lifts Japan, in my opinion, well above the moral plane of the gangster postwar regimes in the Soviet Union and in Germany.

The third point of difference, as I look back upon my Russian and Japanese impressions, is that Soviet communism is an aggressive challenge to Western individualistic civilization. Japanism is not. Admirers of the Soviet regime, not only professed Communists, but non-Communist "sympathizers" are never tired of proclaiming, in the most extravagant terms, its superiority to "bourgeois democracy"; and this is a constant and, I think, legitimate spur to criticism on the part of non-admirers like myself.

I have never been inclined to overemphasize the "menace" of communism. Americans, in my opinion, are far too prone to become excited over "menaces" which are wholly or largely imaginary. And the propagandist efforts of Communists in America and Western Europe have always seemed to me an occasion for laughter rather than for police action. Still the aftermath of the World War is a disconcerting reminder that communism, fascism, or some other form of brutal and violent social upheaval, ending in a new servitude, may come about not when people can think sanely and reasonably but when they are in a fury of rage and

despair as a result of some great catastrophe, such as a lost war. This is why Stalin has worked with such consistency and, unfortunately, with such success, for a war which would engulf the major European powers outside of the Soviet Union.

On the other hand the essential features of the Japanese social order, the all-pervading patriarchal family system, the Emperor-worship, enshrined in old myths and traditions, are obviously and uniquely Japanese. They might be imposed on weaker Asiatic peoples, like the Koreans. They are neither a menace nor a challenge to Western countries, where they could never become a way of life.

On the whole Japan left me rather cold. It did not arouse either strong enthusiasm or lasting antipathy. What I remember most strongly, what I hope to enjoy again is the almost perfect blending of people and landscape in a country of rare natural beauty. I should like to see the rugged coast of Izu again, with the weather-beaten fishermen drying their nets on the sand. It would be good to follow the paths among the cool green hills around Karuizawa, to see peasants in straw raincoats on misty rainy days in the rice fields around the lakes at the base of Fujiyama. And I can never forget the peace of a Japanese village shrine, set in its grove of pines or cryptomerias. (It is ironical to think that the peasants from the tranquil nearby village have been creating anything but peace in China.) There is an indescribable but unmistakable harmony about Japan, a blend of land and folk which, I hope, will somehow survive the turbulent adventure into which its leaders have led the nation.

## CHAPTER TWELVE: *Europe Toward Catastrophe*

*“Europe is like a drunkard staggering along the brink of an abyss. No one knows whether he will fall over or not.”*

This was how one of our friends in Tokyo, a clever and unconventional Continental diplomat, summed up one of the numerous crises and war scares of which we experienced the repercussions in Japan. His attitude coincided with my own viewpoint, which I shall explain at some length because it reflects my reaction to the events which led up to the culminating point of the new European war in September, 1939.

I considered Europe a unit, perhaps the most important unit, in Western civilization. Any European war involving the West European countries which still remained democratic and individualistic I considered an unmitigated calamity, certain to hasten very greatly, perhaps to complete the process of decline and fall of the individualist cycle of civilization which dates, in a general way, from the French Revolution. If there had to be a war I wanted to see it kept out of the civilized part of the world. I hoped there would be enough farsighted statesmanship in England and France to steer the new dynamism of the Third Reich (once it had become too strong, after rearmament and the reoccupation of the Rhineland, to be easily crushed) eastward toward the inevitable collision with its fellow barbarism, the Stalinite dictatorship.

I was profoundly skeptical as to the feasibility of all far-reaching schemes of so-called collective security. It seemed to me that one could not expect equality of obligations when there was no equality of risk. In other words a country which was not itself exposed to attack could not reasonably be expected to come to the aid of some

other power which lay in the pathway of danger, more particularly if this other power had provoked or aggravated the danger by its own policy. To put it still more bluntly and specifically, in the light of contemporary issues, I should consider it criminal folly to conscript Americans and send them to fight overseas because France and England had gone to war not to defend their own frontiers but to support an extremely brittle ally in Eastern Europe.

Another obstacle to the effective functioning of any league of nations which seemed to me almost insuperable was the formidable divergence of viewpoints as between peoples and between governments. This divergence has greatly increased since the World War. There was a kind of international freemasonry, a community of tastes and ideas, of habits and vices, between the prewar ruling classes of Germany and Great Britain, France and Italy, Russia and Japan. It would be impossible to find nearly so much common ground between a French and British statesman of the present time, a German Nazi, an Italian Fascist, a Russian Communist, and a Japanese young militarist. The world has become less, not more, united as a consequence of the World War and the unreal peace which followed it. The indispensable prerequisite for effective international co-operation, some community of ideas and standards among the peoples who would have to implement it, has disappeared.

It was with this general background of ideas that I followed, first from Tokyo, then from America and from Paris, the uneasy vicissitudes of Europe's chronic prewar crisis. I was so firmly convinced that a general European war, quite regardless of its military issue, would be a terrific, quite possibly a fatal, setback for European civilization that I was for peace, not at any price (I have never accepted the philosophy of absolute nonresistance), but at any price short of the surrender of the independence and territorial integrity of the few remaining liberal states of Western and Northern Europe. I was implacably opposed to "preventive" wars, undertaken for the purpose of defeating a power that might or might not be an enemy at some future time. Such wars seemed to me about as sensible as jumping off a cliff because of the fear that some day one might be attacked by cancer.

It seemed to me that many bellicose publicists, in the democracies as in the dictatorships, gravely underestimated the overhead costs of war. Not only would the loss of life be far greater than in the old-fashioned eighteenth century war, fought with small pro-



fessional armies; not only would the physical devastation be much greater because of the destructive possibilities of modern science; but the permanent after effects of a general war gave every promise of being both far-reaching and disastrous. Each of the three modern revolutionary changes which I disliked so intensely—communism, fascism, national socialism—grew directly out of the World War. There seemed to me little ground for believing that the fruits of a new mass slaughter, in which the destruction and brutalization would be perhaps even greater, would be any sweeter. I was inclined to agree with Bertrand Russell when he suggested that perhaps what would come after Hitler in Germany would be as much worse than Hitler as Hitler was worse than the Kaiser.

Two early warning signals of the European crisis that was to become permanent in 1938 were the repudiation of the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles in 1935 and the reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936. At the time, had the responsibility been mine, I should not have started a war on either of these issues; but in retrospect I think the British-French decision not to fight was mistaken. Germany could have been stopped with little cost in 1935 or 1936. After 1936 I became convinced that the Third Reich was too strong to be stopped without ruinous cost, and placed all my hopes in the canalization of German expansionism in an eastward direction.

My reaction to the next warning signal, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, was mixed. I sympathized with the underdogs, the Abyssinians, just as I had sympathized with Abd-el-Krim and his Moors when they were fighting against France, just as I should have been in heart with the Boers against the British or with the Filipinos under Aguinaldo when they were fighting the American Army. As a lover of liberty I am an instinctive anti-imperialist.

At the same time, if anyone had put to me the question, "Would you volunteer to fight for Abyssinia?" my reply would have been emphatically in the negative. And this led me to question the expediency of international action to check such forays as Japan's seizure of Manchuria or Italy's conquest of Abyssinia. I felt that the great majority of people in all civilized countries would, like myself, strongly object to being sent to fight for the maintenance of frontiers in semibarbarous parts of the world. And I can conceive

of nothing more disgustingly immoral than the statesman or legislator who sends others to die for a cause in which he does not believe sufficiently to be willing to risk his own life.

I have always been extremely skeptical as to the possibility of checking a powerful nation on the warpath by measures "short of war." The abysmal fiasco of the sanctions against Italy should be an object lesson in this connection. The conviction has been hardening in me that a nation can pursue one of two dignified consistent courses when some other state seizes a piece of foreign territory. It can fight if it believes that its vital interests are seriously affected. Or it can accept the new situation. There is little to be said, I think, for a middle course of nonrecognition, pinpricking notes, economic reprisals.

Some of the moral indignation over Abyssinia, especially in England with its vast colonial empire, seemed to me rather overdone. One good bishop, I remember, expressed the opinion that Italy was "possessed of an evil spirit of surpassing magnitude." One suspected that this admonition would have had as little effect on the typical hardboiled Fascist as the fervent appeals of the good old Socialist editor that he abdicate the throne to prove his manhood and independence had on King Victor Emmanuel of Italy.

All these European detonations reached Tokyo in muffled and subdued form; but the explosion of September, 1938, made its reverberations felt in the Japanese capital. We had no radio to accentuate its dramatic aspects; the Japanese police vigilantly enforced a prohibition of the short-wave radio sets which might be a medium for the transmission of "dangerous thoughts" from abroad to the Island Empire. But the news dispatches were sensational enough without emotional garnishings.

Despite the alarming situation in Europe I set out on a long planned trip to Hongkong and Canton. This involved some risk of being cut off and stranded should hostilities break out in Europe, because a swift Japanese blow against British possessions in the Orient was a distinct possibility in such a case. Every day, along with the other passengers, I watched the ship news bulletins anxiously. When I arrived in Hongkong it seemed that the Sudeten territory would be handed over to Germany without a struggle.

My old Tokyo friend, Guenther Stein, now established in Hongkong, invited me to dinner in his pleasantly cool apartment on the Peak. He had been obliged to obtain special permission to

reside in this physically and socially exalted quarter, where Chinese and foreigners of inferior clay are barred. (The little snobberies and discriminations of Hongkong would have made a delicious subject for a humorous article.) Despite the handicap of a bad cough which I had been unable to shake off since leaving Tokyo, I soon became involved in a vigorous argument with several members of the company, especially with one whom I instinctively christened the Red Knight. He was a young British journalist with the unusual combination of the prefix of Sir and a very left-wing set of politico-economic beliefs. He was all for fighting over Czechoslovakia, Spain, and anything else that offered a chance to strike a blow at fascism. He also cherished a naïve faith, which must have withered in the light of recent events, that the Soviet Union was eager to rush into the fray on the side of the democracies.

I argued that Europe was confronted with a choice between a lesser and a greater evil, that the lesser evil was the abandonment of Czechoslovakia and the greater evil a general war, in which Czechoslovakia would certainly be obliterated at the beginning, with an extremely faint chance of resurrection at the end. I recalled the Thirty Years War, which had also started in Bohemia. By the time it was ended everyone had forgotten how it started, and the whole of Central Europe had been reduced to a dreary waste which it required generations to restore to relative prosperity. I foresaw (and still foresee) a very similar course for the war which was to start a year afterwards with Poland, not Czechoslovakia as the occasion.

The local situation at Hongkong was very interesting, and I put in about two undisturbed days studying it. The city was booming with war prosperity; wealthy Chinese refugees were spending money freely in every restaurant, cabaret, and dance hall. At the same time precautionary measures were being taken. Almost all the British warships had been withdrawn from exposed stations in north and central China and concentrated in the relative safety of Hongkong. A British officer with whom I talked was wondering whether events would move too rapidly to permit the withdrawal of the British troops in the foreign concessions of Tientsin and Shanghai.

Hongkong was an excellent listening post. On the same day I met at tea Percy Chen, son of the Hankow Foreign Minister and an ardent Nationalist propagandist, and went to dinner in the same

hotel with a retired Japanese diplomat named Yada, who was on the scene as an unofficial observer for Japan. It was again with Yada that I spent the most critical evening of my stay in Hongkong, just before the news of the agreement to hold the Munich conference had reached the Far East, when it seemed that war was very imminent.

Like many of the older Japanese, he was very doubtful as to Germany's chances of victory. He questioned whether the new German army was as good as the Imperial army and spoke of the preponderance of the democratic countries in wealth and natural resources. It is such considerations, I am sure, that led the Japanese Government to decline the conclusion of a full-fledged military alliance with Germany in the first half of 1939.

I received one of the severest psychological shocks of my life on the Saturday in Hongkong when I walked into the office of a local broker from whom I hoped to obtain some economic information and learned of the breakdown of the talks at Godesberg. At that distance this news, with its accompaniment of sensational rumors in the local English-language newspapers, suggested that war was only a matter of days.

The thought almost made me physically sick. There was no element of personal fear: I was not likely to be one of the millions who would be killed, maimed, gassed, blinded, or blown to bits in the prospective carnage. But, as I took a long solitary walk around the Peak, with the beautiful view of the blue sunlit sea a thousand feet below, trying to steady my thoughts and my nerves, I could not repress a predominant feeling of helpless, bitter disgust with the age in which I lived—an age that, within the lapse of a generation, was apparently to witness two carnivals of organized mass murder.

I tried to take refuge in an increased sense of individual personality. In a letter which I wrote to Sonya I said that, the more barbarous the world might become outside, the more civilized we must try to become within. I imagined ourselves, in a sort of bravado, playing César Franck's Symphony during an air raid.

It was a positive relief to leave Hongkong, where each screaming newspaper headline brought Europe's catastrophe closer, and to visit Canton, gashed and scarred by hundreds of Japanese air raids. There were several such raids during my brief stay; but news from Europe was scanty and fragmentary. My last sight of Canton, from a river steamer, was of people huddling up under projecting

roofs of shelters (there were no regular shelters except for officials) stoically waiting for the bombs which, as the shrill blasts of the sirens announced, would soon be dropping.

Considered from one standpoint, however, Canton was mildly encouraging. As an important railway junction and point of transfer for the munitions which were pouring into China through British Hongkong it had been a constant target for the Japanese bombing airplanes. Its air defenses were negligible. The Chinese airplanes were concentrated in the Yangtze valley. Canton's anti-aircraft guns made a good deal of noise, but never seemed to bring down a hostile airplane.

Yet the city, after a year's ordeal, still stood. There were bad patches of ruins and rubble, and the Chinese authorities who were showing me about the city naturally saw to it that I should not miss any of these; but the vast majority of the city buildings were still intact. Canton presented nothing like the grim spectacle of desolate ruin which I had seen in Chapei, one of the Chinese suburbs of Shanghai, where artillery shelling and a huge fire had combined with air bombing to inflict destruction.

The scraps of European news that reached me in Canton through the radio and through telephone messages from Hongkong were not encouraging, and I returned to Hongkong on Wednesday September 27, to find the headlines announcing: "Last Peace Hope Fails." The news of the agreement to meet at Munich reached Hongkong late Wednesday night. I went to bed expecting to see war announced in Thursday's newspaper. Suspense was slightly prolonged on the following morning, because the Hongkong newspaper, in British fashion, devoted its first page to advertisements. Opening up to the inside news pages I saw that the war had been staved off.

By the time I arrived at Shanghai on the return journey to Tokyo, Munich was an accomplished fact. I was then and am now, in retrospect, an unrepentant *Munichois*, to use a French term that is usually applied as a term of abuse. But my interpretation of the significance of the Munich accord evidently differed from that of the British and French statesmen—or perhaps Chamberlain and Daladier changed their minds afterwards.

I interpreted Munich not as a permanent fixation of European boundaries, but as a renunciation by Great Britain and France of

interference in Eastern Europe. Such a renunciation, I was and am convinced, would have been the wisest course which the Western democracies could have pursued. If they proposed to "stop Hitler," the time for this was before the German Western frontier was fortified, before the German air force had become the strongest in Europe. Hitler, left alone in Eastern Europe, would have built up an economic empire there which might have occupied him for years. There would have been every possibility, had England and France kept their hands off in Eastern Europe, that the German dictator would have clashed with the Soviet Union, because his ambition would certainly have extended beyond the Soviet frontier. And on the day when those two systems of streamlined neobarbarism came into conflict, the civilized countries of the world could have breathed a deep sigh of relief.

Such were the perspectives which I foresaw after Munich. I still believe they would have been realized if it had not been for the complete and, in my opinion, disastrous turn of British policy in the direction of guaranteeing the status quo in Eastern Europe in March, 1939. But this is getting ahead of the story.

With Guenther Stein, whom I considered one of my best and most intelligent friends in the Far East, I had several long talks in Hongkong and Shanghai, before I left Japan. We fought over the battle of Munich, which I was to fight again in Paris with old journalistic friends like H. R. Knickerbocker and John Elliott, of the *Herald Tribune*. To my friends, who insisted that Hitler must be stopped, that war was better than surrender, I maintained that, on the basis of the very recent experience of the World War, war was far more likely to produce Hitlerism, communism, or some other denial of democracy and individualism in France and England than it was to make sweetness and light prevail in Germany. At least the chance of steering Hitler against Stalin was worth taking. France and England could always defend themselves with every prospect of success if they were directly attacked. I could see no convincing reason, moral, political, or strategic, why they should become involved in a war on some East European issue.

In one of our last talks Stein made a remark which I often remembered. We had been discussing places where one might seek a refuge from the crisis.

"It's no use," he said. "You could go to the end of the world, to the most remote island in the Pacific. But this pursuing, devouring crisis will follow you."

At the time I thought he was too pessimistic. But I was to remember his remark again and again during the tragic year 1939. International news was not disturbing during our passage across the Pacific in the first part of March. But after Elizabeth and I had admired the splendid mountain scenery of the Canadian Rockies and were somewhere in the prairies, about as far as we could be physically from the trouble centers of Europe and Asia, the local newspapers displayed the news of the seizure of Prague. An Englishwoman from Manchuria was traveling on the same train with us, and her first reaction, as I felt, was that of any sensible human being on being faced with the possibility that one's country might be involved in war on some foreign issue:

"What is England doing about this? Nothing, I hope."

This was also my own hope, for reasons which I have already outlined. But by the time we arrived in Boston it was clear that the policy of Munich was in eclipse. Amid the tumult of news about wars and rumors of wars that poured in from Europe during the few weeks, from the middle of March to the middle of April, which I spent in America, nothing shocked me so profoundly as the British unconditional guaranty to Poland. Then for the first time I became convinced that war of the worst kind was inevitable in Europe—a war in which the democracies and the fascist powers would wage a struggle of mutual exhaustion and near extermination, all for the ultimate benefit of the delighted Asiatic in the Kremlin, who would be ready at the end of the slaughter to step in and promote the social revolution which would destroy what little civilization the war had left.

For it seemed to me obvious that Hitler, in his strong military position, would never accept as permanent the eastern frontiers prescribed by the Treaty of Versailles. It was equally obvious that Poland, with its assurance of British and French support, would not yield an inch. Catastrophe, therefore, was only a question of time. This was what my reason told me; but, like most other people, I hoped for a saving miracle up to the very day when the irrevocable declarations of war were made.

So it was the European situation that preoccupied much of my thought during my stay in America. At the same time I was ex-

tremely busy. I wrote a number of articles for the *Monitor* on various aspects of the Far Eastern situation, on my fleeting impressions of America, on the essential similarities between communism and fascism. I was also hard at work on a revision of "Japan over Asia," parts of which had become outdated as a result of the war in China. Sonya was in the hospital, recovering from a serious operation. My regular routine was to shut myself up in my hotel room and work all morning and afternoon, with the break of a walk to the hospital where Sonya was recuperating and a talk with her.

In the evenings I found time for visits to old friends and acquaintances such as Bruce Hopper, whom, with his wife, we had known very well in Moscow, Edward Weeks, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Edwin Reischauer, now a member of the Harvard faculty, whom we had known as an Oriental student in Tokyo, and my former professor of biblical literature at Haverford, Dr. Henry J. Cadbury. At an informal party to which Hopper took me I met Vincent Sheean for the first time since the Hankow days of 1927. We had reached different conclusions after observing more or less the same facts of contemporary life, as I realized when I read his book "Not Peace but a Sword," with its suggestion that the hope of humanity lies in "the will and instinct of the proletariat." Perhaps a poor hope is better than none; but it is frankly puzzling to me that one should see any particular saving grace in the proletariat, a class which under no system exercises any determining influence on the course of affairs of state (how much did any "proletarians" influence Stalin in making his deal with Hitler?) and which, as regards ideas and psychology, is entirely different in England, in the Soviet Union, in Japan and in Germany.

Along with Sheean I met Robert Dell, veteran correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*. I had a favorable recollection of Dell because he had opposed "war to the bitter end" and had been expelled from France, his second home, by Clemenceau. But Dell had succumbed to the obsession, familiar in left-wing intellectual circles, of violent anti-fascism combined with uncritical pro-communism. At this gathering Dell was dogmatically sure that Stalin would fight for any victim of fascist aggression, and that Chamberlain and Daladier would shrink from war. How many such cloud-castles must have tumbled with the signature of the German-



Soviet pact, the declarations of war by France and Great Britain and the Soviet invasion of Poland.

Unlike some people, I am in the habit of reading newspapers and magazines with which I am often in disagreement. Consequently I followed pretty closely the strong pro-communist trend among American radicals and liberals which set in with the American economic crisis and persisted, with ups and downs, for several years, although it sustained something of an eclipse after the signature of Stalin's pact with Hitler.

It has always seemed to me little short of disgraceful for an intellectual to adopt an attitude of fulsome adulation toward a dictatorship that has gone even beyond the fascist states in the persecution of its own educated class. What can one think of the moral and intellectual integrity of the writer or artist who uncritically approves a system under which all the creative arts are prostituted to the glorification of the dictatorship, of the scientist who praises a regime which keeps so many of its own scientists in concentration camps, of the Christian minister (there are some of them) who heaps applause on a dogmatically atheistic system that has done everything that force and propaganda can do to destroy every form of Christian faith?

Is "fulsome adulation" too strong a term to apply to the mental attitude of these pro-communist intellectuals? Let me cite a few passages from a manifesto which over four hundred American intellectuals, some of them well known in arts and letters and science, signed and published—just on the eve of the conclusion of the Soviet German Pact:

Our object . . . is to make it clear that Soviet and fascist policies are diametrically opposed. . . . We should like to stress ten basic points in which Soviet socialism differs from totalitarian fascism.

1. The Soviet Union continues as always to be a bulwark against war and aggression, and works unceasingly for a peaceful international order. . . .

9. The Soviet Union considers political dictatorship a transitional form and has shown a steadily expanding democracy in every sphere. Its epoch-making new constitution guarantees Soviet citizens universal suffrage, civil liberties. . . .

The smoking ruins in Finland offer a sufficient commentary on the first statement. As for the last one, no one with the least knowledge of Soviet realities could have signed it honestly without ap-

pending a reservation to the effect that the universal suffrage was meaningless and the civil liberties nonexistent. Probably the signatories of this pompous manifesto would like to have it forgotten.

I don't think it should be forgotten, for two reasons. It furnishes the most striking piece of documentation of a mental trend that deserves to rank with Buchmanism as an essay in escape from reality. And this combination of unreserved pro-communism with violent anti-fascism did more harm, I believe, than is generally recognized. It was by no means confined to America; it was also quite pronounced in England and France. And it did much to prejudice public opinion against the only policy that would, I think, have offered any real chance of averting the present war: the policy of steering Hitler eastward and reckoning on the probable ultimate clash between his dictatorship and Stalin's.

I gave a few talks on the Far East and, quite against my own will and desire, sometimes found myself forced into the position of devil's advocate when there was a discussion or a presentation of opposed viewpoints. As I have already pointed out, I was in no sense emotionally pro-Japanese. I had enjoyed some of the minor aspects of life there; but it was at my own initiative that the *Monitor* transferred me to Europe, and I had fairly danced with joy at the prospect of substituting Paris for Tokyo as a permanent residence. (To be sure, I had not foreseen Paris as from September, 1939.)

But when I was paired with such vehemently anti-Japanese speakers as a young Chinese economist, an earnest American missionary fresh from China, and Japan's passionate accuser, Miss Freda Utley, I found myself almost pushed into adopting a position relatively favorable to Japan. I simply could not believe, for instance, on the basis of my last observations in Japan and China, that Japan was on the verge of economic collapse, or that the Chinese guerrillas were inflicting very formidable losses on the Japanese troops of occupation. Another point on which I took issue with some pro-Chinese or anti-Japanese speakers was in firmly opposing American involvement, direct or indirect, in the Far Eastern war.

On the economic side it had always seemed to me the height of absurdity to go to war with Japan because of American trade and investments in China. Not only were these economic stakes negligible in themselves, but they were much smaller than Ameri-

can trade and investments in Japan, all of which would, of course, be lost by the very fact of war. And the cost of a war with Japan, at the most modest computation, as I once reckoned out, would exceed the probable value of American trade with China for the next century.

As for the moral side of the question, I considered that there is no higher moral responsibility for a government than to keep its people out of unnecessary wars. And my definition of an unnecessary war, for the United States, is one unprovoked by hostile aggression against the American continent. Individual Americans could express their feelings by contributing to Chinese relief, by boycotting Japanese goods, even by volunteering for service in the Chinese army, if they were sufficiently adventurous. But the American Government, I believed, should remain out; and the best way to remain out, I was convinced, was to abstain from unneutral and discriminatory action, economic and political.

I could not subscribe to the theory, very popular in some American circles, that there was a permanently tenable halfway house between war and peace, that America could stop Japan without ultimately running a very great risk of becoming involved in war. Sanctions, under whatever form they might be imposed, seemed to me a back door to war.

We spent our last days in America in New York. They were crowded and hectic with last-minute shopping and meetings with old friends from Moscow and Tokyo, such as Geroid Robinson of Columbia University, one of America's best historical scholars in the Russian field, and Nathaniel Peffer, well known writer on the Far East, whom we had frequently seen in Tokyo during the first weeks of the Sino-Japanese war.

Peffer, incidentally, must be credited with one of the neatest retorts to Japanese propaganda I have ever heard. After the fighting began, English-speaking Japanese, who are apt to repeat *ad nauseam* any foreign phrase with which they may be familiar, commenced to go about expressing fear that Japan's "real intentions" were "misunderstood" abroad. Finally one of these Japanese began to press Peffer for his personal opinion on this subject. Wasn't it likely that Japan's real intentions were not understood? To get rid of him Peffer replied: "Oh, I don't see how your real intentions could be misunderstood now. There might have been some uncertainty before hostilities commenced; but there surely

is no shadow of doubt now." And the Japanese departed beaming with satisfaction. A sense of irony is not among the gifts of the average Japanese.

We spent one Muscovite evening at the home of Eugene Lyons, formerly correspondent of the United Press in the Soviet capital and recently appointed editor of the *American Mercury*. Almost all the guests had been in Moscow, and the atmosphere recalled the large parties which Lyons and his exuberant wife, Billie, used to give in their apartment in Moscow—except for the absence of Soviet citizens. The climax of the evening was reached when Joe Shaplen, whom I counted with Isaac Don Levine, Lyons, Malcolm Muggeridge, and myself among the few honest members of the "anti-Comintern front," dashed in with several copies of the latest issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*, containing one of the very interesting articles of the fugitive Red Army intelligence officer, Krivitzky. He gave a detailed account of Soviet intervention in Spain and also described Stalin's early efforts to reach an agreement with Hitler.

Naturally I could obtain only very fleeting and superficial impressions of America during such a brief stay. On the controversial subject of the New Deal my reaction, based, as I fully recognize, on very inadequate study and observation, was mixed. The reign of Babbitt during the gaudy twenties had led us into a frightful mess. It is still difficult for me to understand how men with pretensions to economic literacy could have believed in the durability of a prosperity that rested on such a shaky triangular base as the huge transfers of capital under the war debts and reparations arrangements, both economically impossible over a long period of time, speculative American investments from China to Peru and a high-tariff policy that made the default of many of our foreign debtors ultimately inevitable.

I fully agreed with the observation (I don't know where it originated) that, whether or not President Roosevelt had supplied the right answers, he has asked the right questions. Without going into problems of detail and administration, on which I am not competent to express an opinion, I am heartily in sympathy with all the efforts of the New Deal in the direction of providing greater social security and protecting labor against some of the former oppressive devices of employers. On the other hand, largely as a result of my Russian experience, I am skeptical of those moves

which look toward a planned economy. There has been a lack of co-ordination in the New Deal measures, and the country could and should have received better value both in reduced unemployment and in tangible work achieved for the huge outlay on relief, necessary as this was in view of the unprecedented problem of permanent large-scale unemployment.

The experience of the last few years shows that a wide field can safely be left open for social experimentation so long as the essential democratic safeguards of freedom of speech and press and election are maintained. Our American democracy has worked better and with more intelligent discrimination than demagogic critics on the right and on the left are willing to admit.

Roosevelt was overwhelmingly vindicated in 1936 when he held up his general record of achievement against the negative program and minor, if amiable, personality of Mr. Landon. On the other hand the President was checked whenever he went against public opinion, as when he tried to pack the Supreme Court and opposed the election of Senators of his own party who had voted independently.

It was also heartening to me to see concrete evidences, on several occasions, of strong popular feeling in favor of keeping out of Europe's and Asia's wars. The very close vote in the House of Representatives on the Ludlow Amendment, providing for a national referendum on any declaration of war in the event that America and its possessions are not attacked, was one such evidence. It was all the more striking because the vote was taken at a time when the sinking of the *Panay* might have been expected to arouse American bellicose sentiment. The refusal to lift the embargo on arms sales to belligerents in the summer of 1939 was another such evidence, as was the strong opposition in Congress to repeal of the embargo after the beginning of the European war. The existence of this solid bedrock of common-sense sentiment in favor of not fighting for non-American interests was all the more encouraging because of the dubious attitude of not a few men in high and responsible posts, to say nothing of a considerable number of American intellectuals. Walter Lippmann, I think, once boasted in the *New Republic* that the intellectuals had brought America into the World War. It seemed to me an uncommonly sorry thing to be proud of; and now again some men and women whose ex-

perience and information should warrant better judgment seem to be doing their best to bring America into another war of which the cost in human lives would probably be far greater than that of the crusade of 1917-1918.

I cordially approved President Roosevelt's Chautauqua speech of 1936, in which he expressed regret that it was beyond his power to banish war from the world and declared that America should protect "itself and its neighborhood," if I remember the phrase correctly. This seemed to me the simple statement of a reasonable foreign policy, on which practically all Americans could agree; but I was alarmed by the implications of his speech in Chicago a year later, in which he spoke of "quarantining" aggressor nations. This phrase, if it meant anything (and men in responsible positions should not, I think, use phrases which they do not intend to implement), opened up a dangerous vista of involvement in wars far beyond the limits of the American continent.

I left America in April, 1939, feeling that, with all the hardships of the crisis, all the inequities of uneven distribution of wealth, all the failures of the still new quest for security, its outlook for the future was immeasurably better than that of the older and, in normal times, pleasanter lands of Europe for which I was bound. America was not living in an atmosphere of conscription, gas masks, underground shelters. One of my last thoughts as I left New York was: If only America will have the common sense and self-restraint not to yield to foreign-inspired propaganda, not to waste the lives and substance of its people in fighting foreign quarrels, the future of the civilization which will inevitably move to its decline and fall if Europe persists in tearing itself to pieces will belong to the western side of the Atlantic. It was a strange thought for a voluntary expatriate, for one to whom Europe has meant so much more, in many ways, than America. But in this age of dynamism and catastrophe one is sometimes forced to swift revaluations of standards and ideas.

Our voyage across the Atlantic was calm enough physically; but every day brought us appreciably closer to Europe's heaving tension as the ship's news reported new moves on the political chessboard, with its millions of human beings for pawns. One day was the news that Great Britain had introduced conscription. Then there would be speculation about the probable character of Hitler's

impending speech. Elizabeth's daily question, before we started our round of walks and pingpong games, was: "Is the crisis looking any worse today?"

After we landed in France the signs of this crisis, so permanent that some other name for it seemed to be required, multiplied. One saw trenches being dug in the Champs Élysées and other famous streets as air-raid shelters. At the entrance to every house were detailed instructions as to what to do against bombs and gas, information as to the location of the nearest *abri* (shelter), directions as to the province where women and children should go in the event of an evacuation. On the day when I first visited my old Berlin friend, John Elliott, of the *Herald Tribune*, his four-year-old son was trying on a gas mask, thinking it was a very amusing new toy.

But what impressed me most in France was the calm in the face of imminent peril. Everyday life went on quite normally. People sipped their drinks in the many sidewalk cafés, went to ride in the Bois de Boulogne, filled the opera house, where one could imagine oneself surrounded by characters from Balzac's novels and De Maupassant's stories. There is, of course, a physical and psychological limit to human capacity for nervous strain. The "war of nerves," as the French called the state of permanent crisis, had been going on so long that people refused to become excited over speeches and threatening political gestures. A kind of fatalism prevailed, accompanied by hope that war would somehow be averted. The fatalism, I thought, found good expression in the remark of a French journalist, an old acquaintance from Tokyo, when I asked him whether it would be possible to live in Paris during the prospective air bombardments of wartime.

"One can live anywhere, you know," he replied gravely. "I lived through a barrage in the World War which very few soldiers of my regiment survived."

During my years in Russia I had never spent a vacation in France, so that Paris was an entirely new city for me. The city was fascinating from first acquaintance, although I should have preferred to savor its mellow beauties in an atmosphere free from the shadow of the gas mask and the air-raid shelter. I loved its innumerable bookstores, large and small, with their tempting complete editions of Montaigne and Montesquieu, Balzac and Flaubert, Pascal and Anatole France. I loved the book stalls on the Seine,

where one could browse for hours in search of literary curiosities in various languages. I loved the old part of the city around Notre Dame, so redolent of the Middle Ages.

To me much of the fascination of the city lay in the names of its streets, so laden with historical and literary associations. How much more attractive than Fifteenth Street or One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street or Smith, Jones, and Robinson Street were such thoroughfares as Avenue Victor-Hugo, Avenue Montaigne, Rue Balzac. Some of the street names prompted me to refresh my knowledge of French history. Near the *Monitor* office, on the Rue du Faubourg St.-Honoré, was the Rue Boissy-d'Anglas, where I often went for lunch in a delightful little restaurant called Tante Louise which specialized in southern French cooking. I associated Boissy-d'Anglas with the history of the French Revolution. When I looked up his record he emerged as a distinctly sympathetic character, who had tried to check the worst excesses of the Terror and had saluted the head of one of his colleagues in the Convention when it was brandished in front of his face on a pike by a member of the mob.

Many quarters of the city spoke eloquently of some phase of French history. The Renaissance is commemorated in such names as Francis I, Marignan, Clément-Marot. And the glories, dazzling though fleeting and terribly costly, of Napoleon's Empire, lived in the names of the streets which radiate from or circle the Arc de Triomphe: Grande-Armée, Wagram, Friedland, Presbourg, Tilsit.

I sometimes felt that there was more intelligence in a single district of Paris than in the whole of Tokyo or of Soviet Moscow. Not only did the French themselves have minds of the highest quality, supple, many-sided, lively, well informed, but in Paris one could find refugees from the various brutalitarian revolutions, intelligent and humane Russians, Germans, Italians. It was among the Russians that we naturally found most friends.

Among the first people whom we met in Paris were Alexander Kerensky, head of the short-lived liberal government that spanned the gap between Tsarism and Sovietism, the Socialist Revolutionary Zenzinov, a splendid type of the prewar Russian intellectual, Boris Souvarine, a nervous, highly intelligent little man who many years ago had been a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. He was one of the early secessionists from orthodox communism and had just published by far the best



extant life of Stalin, which is also an admirable history of the Soviet regime and the Communist party.

It gave me a positive glow of enthusiasm once to see some little stickers with appeals for revolt against Stalin which Russian émigrés in Paris had prepared and hoped to smuggle into Russia. I knew that all such attempts were most probably utterly futile; but, after living twelve years under a dictatorship so heavy that it seemed to crush any attempt at protest, I was almost irrationally glad to learn that they were being made.

The French press, so diverse in viewpoint until the outbreak of the war, was a refreshing stimulus after the dull uniformity of Moscow and the misty vagueness of Tokyo. I discovered, incidentally, that I was obliged to devote much more of my time to newspaper reading in Paris than in Moscow or Tokyo. As sources of strict news, in the American sense, the French papers left much to be desired. One read many of them largely for the ideas of a single brilliant or well informed commentator, such as Pertinax, or Geneviève Tabouis, or Pierre Dominique, or Lucien Bourguès. But the little cartoons, the sharp epigrams, the first-page articles on letters and arts were a never failing delight.

Meanwhile the shadow of war grew gradually, if slowly, deeper. At no time after my arrival in Europe at the end of April could I feel that the crisis was being lightened; in my most optimistic moments I could only take comfort in the fact that it was not becoming visibly aggravated. There was no solution of the permanently tense situation at Danzig. The fronts between the militant Third Reich on one side and Poland, strong in its guaranties of British and French support, on the other were becoming constantly stiffer.

One writer in the French press whom I always read with interest and sympathy because his views closely coincided with my own was an ex-Socialist named Marcel Déat. He elicited a storm of abuse from the bellicose publicists when he raised the question, in one article, whether Frenchmen desired to "die for Danzig." In another article he predicted—only too accurately, I fear—that France would emerge, even from a victorious war, "crushed beneath its laurels." Déat favored what seemed to me a sensible and realistic policy of abandoning Eastern Europe, which, as events were soon to show, could not be effectively defended anyway, and concentrating on the defense of France's own frontiers; but his

voice was drowned in the chorus of bellicose publicists. No one was so hot for getting France into war as the French Communists. Those of them who honestly believed that the Soviet Union would prove a bulwark against fascism must have been cruelly surprised by the conclusion of the pact that intertwined the Hakenkreuz with the Soviet Hammer and Sickle.

One of the favorite arguments of the "bellicists," as the advocates of uncompromising resistance to Hitler in Eastern Europe were sometimes called, was the supposed necessity of a two-front war against Germany. Therefore Poland must be supported at all costs, so that the full German strength could not be turned against the West. This contention always seemed to me unconvincing, because I did not believe Poland could keep any large number of German troops occupied long enough to affect seriously the course of the war in the West.

To be sure the "bellicists" had another argument, which they frequently employed and which they are now probably glad to forget. This was the prospect of an alliance with the Soviet Union. How often writers like Pertinax and Henri de Kerillis painted the Franco-British prospects in dark colors if the Soviet alliance were not concluded and threw a considerable share of the blame for not reaching an agreement with Stalin on the French and British negotiators!

Both in my correspondence and in conversation with friends I was a complete and consistent skeptic as to the possibility of the Anglo-French-Soviet alliance. I was not for a moment taken in by the deceptive official optimism which often radiated on this subject. I have seldom seen such a deplorable exhibition of credulity, naïveté and complete misunderstanding of the character, aims, and policies of the Stalinite dictatorship as many highly placed individuals in Great Britain and France displayed during the course of the abortive Moscow negotiations. I was able to forecast the failure of these negotiations very accurately not because of any special sources of diplomatic information, but because, with my background of Russian knowledge, I was able to place myself in Stalin's position and to foresee how he might reasonably be expected to act in a given set of circumstances.

First of all, I was sure there would be no effective Soviet military co-operation after Chamberlain had given the British guaranties of assistance to Poland and Rumania. For these guaranties effec-

tively covered the Soviet western frontier. Hitler could not attack the Soviet Union without first bringing Poland and Rumania into his orbit. Soviet objections about the dangers of "indirect aggression" in the Baltic States (what revolting hypocrisy in the light of the Soviet Government's far from indirect aggression against Poland and Finland!) never impressed me as real or sincere. For no German general would have taken the responsibility of attacking Russia through the narrow corridor of the Baltic States while an intact independent Polish army hung on his flank and rear. Why should Stalin stake his personal despotism on the uncertain issue of war with Germany when Great Britain and France had obligingly stepped in and agreed to fight Germany for him?

I was convinced from my knowledge of Soviet conditions that Stalin feared above everything a major war with a first-class military power. This was the one development that might lead to the overthrow of his terrorist regime. At the same time he was most anxious, for two reasons, to promote the outbreak of a general European war, from which the Soviet Union would remain aloof, merely remaining on the outer fringes and picking up the spoils.

First, the universal ruin, despair, and chaos which one could foresee as the most probable result of a protracted European war would create the most favorable psychological background for a new upsurge of revolutionary communism, discredited though it was by the Soviet experience. Stalin, as a barbarous Asiatic despot, hates European culture and civilization. The hideous barracks towns, built by serf labor around Stalin's "industrial giants," which are somehow always breaking down, such places as Magnitogorsk, Dnieprostroi, Khibinsk, might even seem attractive places in which to live after airplanes had carried out their work of destruction over the beautiful old cities of France and Germany, England and Italy.

Secondly, anything that would tear to pieces the leading European countries was bound to increase the relative strength of the Soviet Union, provided that it could remain aloof from the war. In so far as Stalin was thinking in terms not of international revolution, but of his personal dictatorship, he would again be impelled to abstain from participation in any large-scale war. The first weeks of the war would furnish eloquent illustration of the truth of this proposition.

So I never believed in the feasibility of the Russian alliance. I

considered that it was merely a question whether the Soviet Union would betray France and Great Britain before or after the outbreak of hostilities. I must confess, however, that Stalin's final masterpiece of duplicity, the invitation to Moscow of French and British military missions whose information was doubtless passed on to the German General Staff, followed by the "nonaggression pact" which was such an obvious "aggression pact" against unfortunate Poland was somewhat breath-taking, even for me.

Unlike the World War, which came as almost a complete surprise, the present conflict was preceded by numerous storm signals. One could even foresee, in the spring and early summer, that the high point of dangerous tension would be reached sometime between the middle of August and the end of September. So we decided to take our holidays, which, as I sadly felt, might be the last one could enjoy in Europe for many years, before the middle of August.

At the same time Elizabeth went over to Northern Ireland to visit her best friend in Tokyo, a girl of about her own age named Betty Braithwaite, the daughter of a Quaker missionary who had returned from Japan to Ireland. Elizabeth was still there when the war broke out, and we decided to leave her in this relatively safe place for the time being. Both she and Betty took the keenest interest in the war and agreed that they were at just the right age, old enough to understand it, but not old enough to have the cares of their parents. Elizabeth at the age of ten had decided that she would have four children in later life and wrote us in one of her last letters:

I will certainly have many stories to tell my four children, IF (and it is a big IF) I am alive to tell them.

Sonya and I went to Sils-Maria, in the high mountain valley of the Engadine, in southeastern Switzerland. The name was already familiar; it recalled the Haverford days when I had been such an ardent reader of Nietzsche. For this most poetic of philosophers had spent many summers there.

It proved to be a most beautiful mountain village, quiet and provided with every conceivable charm for the vacation of long walking and easy climbing which I enjoyed. There were peaks all round, with little blue mountain lakes set among the never melting snows. There was a high pass, the Fuorcla Surlej, com-

manding a splendid view of the Engadine Valley and its lakes on one side and several glaciers on the other. And from Maloja, near Sils-Maria, the road led straight down to the Italian frontier through old Italian-Swiss towns whose names were like caresses, Casaccia, Vicosoprano, Promontogno, Castasegna. How I reveled in these glorious mountains, in the old villages where life seemed so refreshingly static in a far too dynamic world! There was a keen, even poignant element in the enjoyment of this last relaxation in a Europe that, as I knew only too well, was likely to blow up at any moment. Sonya rested in the pine forests while I walked; and we both felt immensely strengthened after this Alpine holiday.

It was not all a holiday, so far as I was concerned. Several of the later chapters of this autobiography were sketched out on mountaintops and by the sides of lakes. Ordinarily I would not have worked during a vacation. But this time I felt that there might be few enough days left when I could work in comparative calm.

It was a few days after we returned to Paris that the catastrophe began to assume final shape. On August 21 I left Paris for Brussels, the *Monitor* having suggested mail articles on such peaceful subjects as the Albert Canal, the Exposition at Liège and the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, one of Europe's model miniature states. The situation looked jumpy even before I left Paris. The *Times* of London, far from sensational, published a message from its Berlin correspondent stating that the decisive phase of the struggle for Danzig was a matter of days rather than weeks. However, I set out, with the reflection that there had been war scares before which had not materialized.

I had a day in Brussels in which to stroll about admiring the city's attractive blending of French and Flemish culture, the rich decorations of the market place, the Gothic architecture of the churches, the statues of Godfrey de Bouillon, first Christian King of Jerusalem, and of the martyrs of liberty, Counts Egmont and Horn. Then the bombshell news of the Soviet-German agreement, so euphemistically called a pact of nonaggression, arrived. Up to this time I had tried to hope against hope that there was an even chance of preserving peace. After this amazingly cynical deal between the two forms of brutalitarian state, each of which betrayed its own fanatical ideology, the chances of peace fell immediately to not more than one in ten. I had never been very confident of French and British ability to give Poland effective

aid, even with the limited co-operation of the Soviet Union. Now Poland was obviously lost, crushed, just as it had been in the eighteenth century, between the upper and nether millstones of Germany and Russia. And, thanks primarily to the neo-Napoleonic ambitions of Hitler, secondarily to a French and British guaranty which neither country was in a geographical position to implement, Europe, for the second time within a generation, faced the grim prospect of war to an end that would certainly be bitter, if there was an end at all: millions of men struggling and dying for microscopic bits of soil in the blood and slime of the trenches; slow starvation of German women and children through blockade matched against a German effort to starve England by means of its submarine blockade, with all its attendant horrors of death at sea.

I would have returned to Paris immediately if it had not been for the necessity of reporting the conference of the "Oslo Powers," the group of highly civilized little states, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxemburg, all of which, except the two latter, had the good luck or the good sense to remain out of the World War. The conference itself was a desperate grasping at a last straw. The participants themselves knew that their chance of checking the impending clash of rival empires was negligibly small. Yet there was something very moving and tragic in the appeal which King Leopold of Belgium voiced at the end of the conference, in which he asked whether Europe's civilization was to commit suicide. The answer was to be given all too soon.

I returned to Paris on Thursday night, just a week before the irrevocable last step was taken. Mobilization was already far advanced. Sonya, with her fluent French and her facility for making acquaintances, was able to pick up a good deal in the way of individual reactions. Of martial enthusiasm, such as observers describe in all belligerent countries at the outbreak of the World War, there was not a trace. The typical conscript, often a veteran of the last war, because French conscription takes every able-bodied man between the ages of twenty and forty-eight, with very few exemptions, had no illusions about what he was going into. Stoical acceptance, just as in Japan, the other country at war which I had seen at first hand, was the prevalent mood.

There was unquestionably a widespread feeling—greatly stimulated, of course, by official propaganda—that Hitler was insatiable, that he would leave the French people no peace, that the state of

crises, alarms, semimobilizations of the last year had become intolerable. This was the note which Daladier and other leaders could strike with the surest prospect of finding a favorable response.

On the other hand, a viewpoint which found no public expression, especially after the institution of censorship, was that of some of our neighbors in a little bakery.

"Why do we have to fight for Poland?" said the baker's wife, her eyes red with weeping for the husband and brother who had been mobilized. "I could understand it if our own frontiers had been attacked. But why must we fight for some foreign country?"

"Oh, it's all politics, and all governments are alike," said one of the women in the shop. "Look at Germany and Russia. They said they were enemies, and now they are good friends."

For a week after returning to Paris I lived in an atmosphere of faint hope that catastrophe might be staved off through some last-minute miracle. One did not know except through fragmentary and sometimes inaccurate rumors the character of the notes that were passing between Berlin and London. But the mere fact that the exchange was going on was as welcome as an indefinite reprieve to a man condemned to death. There were ominous signs of war preparation: calling up of new classes of reserves, installation of press censorship, disruption of normal telephone communication with foreign countries, queues of people waiting for gas masks, once bright streets dim and dark at night.

When I saw the faint blue lights on the street corners I thought of Lord Grey's famous saying about the lights of Europe going out; and I felt these lights would not be so easily relit after this war. I followed with much sympathy the articles of Léon Blum, Socialist leader and a typical figure of the highly civilized prewar socialism of the Second International, in *Le Populaire*. "These days of suspense are hard to bear. But one trembles at the thought that they may come to an end," he wrote on one occasion. And after the war had become a reality he echoed my own thought when he wrote: "There are some things so terrible that, although one *knows* them, one cannot *believe* them."

September 1 was a warm sunny morning. The newspapers which I had gone out to buy, as usual, in a little shop around the corner from our apartment in Neuilly, near the Bois de Boulogne, carried no hint that the disaster had actually come to pass; the fighting had begun after they had gone to press. Indeed the news of

the sixteen points which Germany had broadcast as its conditions for a settlement with Poland was mildly encouraging. Everything that has been said about Hitler's duplicity in not submitting these proposals for Polish consideration is justified.

Yet it is doubtful whether the course of events would have been altered if the "sixteen points" had been formally submitted with reasonable time for discussion. For Poland had consistently rejected Hitler's more moderate offer of a settlement based upon German annexation of Danzig, with a Polish free port in the city and an automobile road across the "corridor," and comment on these last suggestions, both in Warsaw and in Paris, was strongly negative. Given the character of the Nazi state, given the dissatisfaction in Germany, which antedated Hitler, with the eastern frontiers prescribed by the Treaty of Versailles, given the German rearmament, with the sense of military superiority to Poland which it conveyed—given these, I felt at the time, a general war was almost fatalistically predetermined from the moment when Great Britain gave its guaranty to Poland and with France, reversing its policy in regard to Czechoslovakia, placed itself at the head of the movement to block German expansion in eastern Europe, thereby paving the way for the German-Soviet agreement. It is unlikely, I think, that Hitler would have come to terms with Stalin if he had been given a free hand in the East.

I learned of the outbreak of the war at the American Embassy on the morning of September 1. My first reaction was one of overwhelming pessimism. This, I thought, was the beginning of the last act in the decline and fall of European civilization. The fabric of this civilization, with its basis of individualism, had survived the shock of the World War, but with terrible rents. Three nations which had made great contributions to world culture, Russia, Germany, and Italy, as a direct result of the World War, had fallen under systems which were a complete negation of the progressive, ascending phase of European civilization during the nineteenth century, a phase which was marked by an ever increasing respect for the rights of the individual personality. What pathetic self-deception to believe that a new European war, waged with still more destructive weapons, could have any happier result!

Just one hope remained on this day when all Europe was, or should have been, in mourning: America must be preserved from this new slaughter, in which all that one could be sure of, in the



words of the bitter Soviet Russian proverb, was that today would be worse than yesterday, but better than tomorrow. This feeling was very much strengthened when another visitor to the Embassy on the day of the outbreak of the war, an enthusiastic interventionist, declared vehemently:

“America will be in this war if men like me have anything to say about it. We could crack Hitler in five years.”

Five years! A good many Americans—millions most probably, as against the hundreds of thousands of our casualties in the World War—would have most probably fallen before the Siegfried Line and on other battlefields of what would most probably be not a single war, but a whole cycle of wars, national and civil. Was there any compelling reason why this should be?

One idea which I simply could not take seriously, although it was hotly maintained by some old acquaintances in Paris, was that Hitler's victory in Europe would be the prelude to a Nazi invasion of the United States. This seemed to me as fantastic as H. G. Wells's conception of an invasion from Mars. There are some eighty million Germans. I do not underestimate their fighting quality, their scientific and technical achievement, their capacity for disciplined organization. But to believe that these eighty million Germans could first conquer a somewhat larger number of Frenchmen and Englishmen, far richer in natural resources, hold down tens of millions of discontented Slav subjects, fend off the Soviet Union, and then launch an invasion of America, a country of one hundred and thirty million people, backed by the strongest industrial plant in the world, and protected by two oceans, simply does not make sense to me.

More appealing and familiar, perhaps, is the argument in the name of the common democratic tradition of the United States, Great Britain, and France. But a full-fledged modern war (it is most unlikely that a war, once begun, could remain a war of limited liability) is too desperately serious to be undertaken without some cause more compelling than sentimentality. A democratic government, based on respect for the individual rights of its citizens, cannot, without being untrue to its own principles, throw these citizens into war unless its own independence or territorial integrity is threatened. This was not the case in the World War; I do not think it will be the case in the present conflict.

Moreover, I confess to a certain weary impatience when I hear

a propagandist broadcast about the war as a struggle for liberty, democracy, and humanity, about Hitler as the source of all the world's ills. Liberty, democracy, humanity are fine words. But war, in the light of very recent history, is a singularly unpromising method of promoting their realization. As is evident from a preceding chapter in the book, Hitler and everything he stands for are abhorrent to me. But if Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini were the distinctive products of the last great war, also announced as a crusade for democracy and the rights of small nations, what reasonable prospect is there that the results of the new war will be more favorable? Have we forgotten how many four-minute experts on international affairs told us that all that was necessary to make a free and happy world was to smash the Kaiser? The Kaiser has gone. The world has not become more pacific or more orderly.

I cannot agree with the contention that the present war was unavoidable for France and Great Britain. Certainly it was not inevitable until the British guaranty to Poland was granted. No war is unavoidable unless the frontiers of a country have been violated or unless some country so close as to be essential to the strategic security of the neighbor state is attacked. It is certainly not true that any attack must produce an international conflagration. Let us take two hypothetical analogies in which England and the United States, not Germany, played the role of the aggressor.

Suppose that, just on the eve of Great Britain's attack on the Boer Republic, Germany had announced that it proposed to guarantee the integrity of the Boer frontiers. Suppose that, while Theodore Roosevelt was preparing, in his own words, to "take" Panama, Japan had declared that it would consider any infringement of the territorial integrity of Colombia a *casus belli*. Is it likely that either England or America would have stayed its hand because of what would have been regarded as impertinent foreign interference?

My strongest feeling whenever I hear someone like the interventionist who was in the Embassy light-heartedly talking about the necessity for America to "crack Hitler," even if it takes five years, is one of the cruel injustice to the future American "unknown soldiers"—Detroit mechanics, Iowa farmers, New England college professors—who would be sacrificed in this alien quarrel. We are not responsible for this new acute phase of the decline and

fall of European civilization. More by accident than by good sense, to be sure, we did not ratify the Treaty of Versailles, a main cause of the rise of Hitler. We were not responsible for the British and French decision not to crush Hitler when this could easily have been done, in 1935 or 1936 on the occasion of Germany's repudiation of the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty and denunciation of the Locarno Treaty. We were not associated with the British and French guaranties to Poland, so recklessly given, so manifestly impossible to implement after Germany had fortified its western frontier. Every people must pay for the mistakes of its own government; but it seems to me outrageously unjust and unreasonable to expect Americans to pay for the mistakes of foreign governments, to give up their lives because of mistaken judgments in the making of which they had not the slightest voice, to give a blank check of support to any foreign government.

So, whenever I hear someone announcing his intention to do what he can to bring America into the war, I feel strengthened in my own resolution to do what little I can to keep America out. I know that terribly powerful forces, compounded of skillful foreign propaganda, of honest emotional sympathy with Great Britain and France and hatred of Hitler, of the shortsighted material self-interest which finds reflection in the boom on the stock market whenever there is the prospect of a good long sanguinary war, are at work to drag America into the world butchery. Much the same combination of circumstances drew us into the last one.

But I have enough faith in the reason and common sense of our own democratic system to believe that we are not fatalistically predestined to succumb. It is not the men like Senator Robert M. La Follette (whose son, I am glad to see, is carrying on in his father's tradition), whom American public opinion has judged wrong in the light of its ultimate reaction to America's participation in the World War. The Neutrality Act, abused by every warmonger, but passed, it may be recalled, with the virtually unanimous approval of the American people, definitely places peace above war profits. Had it been in existence during the World War, our participation would have probably been avoided, because the issues involved in the sinking of American ships carrying supplies to the Allied countries and the deaths of Americans traveling on belligerent ships would not have arisen, and the huge stake which America

had acquired in an Allied victory through a swollen war trade would not have grown up. Friends of peace for America should be most insistent that the only changes in the Neutrality Act should be in the direction of stiffening it.

Let America's destiny be to keep alight the flame of civilization which was lit in Europe and which is now apparently going out there. Let us keep clear of adventurous crusades which, after wasting our lives and property, will inevitably end in futility and disillusionment. Let us be strong for the preservation of peace in our own hemisphere, in the regions where we can reasonably hope to make our military and naval and economic strength decisive. Let us shut our ears to the barrage of conscious and unconscious propaganda that will play on us with increasing force as Europe's death gamble becomes more and more desperate. Let us remember that, by every Christian, humanist, democratic standard, every individual American life is sacred and precious, to be sacrificed only if our own security is threatened, not to be thrown away in the interest of foreign powers. And let us never forget that the surest road to fascism, to communism, to every other form of the brutalitarian state is through war.

This is my testament to the American people in this tragic period of catastrophe for our parent civilization in Europe, written in Paris, in October, 1939.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN: *Dare We Look Ahead?*

*I am beginning to write this chapter* on a dim blacked-out evening in Paris and on a date, September 3, 1939, which the future historian of the decline and fall of European civilization may well regard as decisive. For on this day the two largest remaining democratic and civilized countries of Western Europe decided to stake their democracy and their civilization on the second gigantic international conflict within a generation.

In a preceding chapter I explained why I consider this decision, although probably inevitable from considerations of prestige when it was taken, the product of an unwise policy, based on a miscalculation of forces and on a failure to realize the imperative necessity of making every effort to confine the war to the totalitarian states.

What is the outlook for our Western civilization, now that it has received the shock of a second great war, which is almost certain to achieve world proportions before it is ended, and which, because of the horribly perverted uses of science, gives every prospect of being more destructive than its predecessor? No one with the least sense of realism, it seems to me, would be inclined to give an optimistic answer. King Leopold of Belgium, in his appeal to the world on the eve of the war, gravely posed the question whether Europe is to commit suicide. And Premier Daladier ended his letter to Hitler with a prediction, only too likely to be fulfilled, that in the event of a new Franco-German war "destruction and barbarism will be the surest victors."

Behind the fanfare of nationalist speeches and songs, the competition in propaganda, now so much more extensive and vivid because of the possibilities of the radio and all the other familiar

accompaniments of the process of feeding millions of men to the Moloch of mass slaughter, one senses among thoughtful men on both sides of the front a deep uneasiness. How will it all end? Will any of the governments which began the war be in existence when it is ended? After a conflict that gives every promise of being long and bitter, will there not be some new form of brutal and destructive social revolution, wiping out what little civilization the war may have left?

The experience of the last war is both instructive and disconcerting. Every big positive change in political and social systems since 1914 has been for the worse. The victorious countries, Great Britain, France, and the United States, and the smaller neutral powers have gone on very much as one might have anticipated if there had been no war. There have been the same inventions and changes in social habits, the same alternations of prosperity and depression, the same experiments in social reform.

But the three great postwar revolutions (of which no one, I am convinced, would have occurred in its actual form had it not been for the influence of the war), communism, fascism, national socialism, are all, according to my own individualistic scheme of moral and humane and cultural values, overwhelmingly retrogressive in fundamental character. All are based on the complete denial of the rights of human personality, on the sacrifice of the individual to that swollen and deformed monster, the state. All preach and practice the damnable doctrine, which has probably caused more avoidable human suffering than any other single idea, that the end justifies the means. That the "end" itself for the two leading dictatorships, the Soviet Union and the Third Reich, has become pretty blurred is evident from their recent pact.

I think it is historically indisputable that all these movements stemmed from the World War. The Tsarist system in Russia was decadent. But the scope and the savagery of Lenin's social revolution reflected the bitterness, despair, and brutalization of a people that had been tormented beyond endurance by years of slaughter and defeat in a war against a technically superior enemy.

Italy was formally one of the victorious powers. But it was a poorer and weaker country than Great Britain and France. The war had placed a great strain on its social and economic system. It was cold-shouldered at the peace conference and given a scanty share of the spoils. All this helped to create the atmosphere of

unrest and dissatisfaction which found expression in endless strikes, riots, and extremist demonstrations. And these in turn, since they did not lead up to any definite revolutionary climax, paved the way for the triumph of Fascism, a kind of middle-class bolshevism.

It is equally obvious that German National Socialism is profoundly rooted in the World War. The loss of the war, the cruelties and humiliations of the Treaty of Versailles, created a psychology of bitterness and revenge that found its ultimate expression in the Third Reich. It is true that Nazi propaganda has grossly exaggerated the iniquities of Versailles, and that a victorious Germany would have imposed a worse peace.

But it is also true that Germany was dealt with much more hardly than was France after the Napoleonic Wars that had kept the Continent in a turmoil for half a generation. The refusal to permit Austria to unite with Germany, the placing of three and a half million Germans, against their will, under Czech rule, the assignment to Italy of the solidly German South Tyrol were all violations of the principle of self-determination which was invariably invoked whenever it would work to Germany's disadvantage. The maintenance of the blockade against a half-starved people many months after the Armistice had been signed, and the taking away of milch cows from a country where many children were dying of malnutrition and many more were growing up with rickets, were naturally not forgotten so quickly in Germany as in the Allied countries.

But the worst feature of the Treaty of Versailles was its economic side, the demands that Germany should pay fantastic sums of money which could not conceivably be effectively transferred to the victorious states. These reparation demands—economically absurd, whatever may have been their moral justification—together with the equally unsound American demand for the repayment of war debts which the American high-tariff policy alone made it impossible to collect constituted a very important factor in the unprecedented economic crisis of 1929. And this crisis, as the German election figures show, was a main factor in giving Hitler his mass following, largely recruited from the ruined middle classes and from the unemployed.

The political and social changes of the nineteenth century were profoundly influenced by the French Revolution; and it seems only too probable that the similar changes in the twentieth century

will be greatly influenced by the communist-fascist pattern. Here is certainly no cause for optimism about the age to which we must look forward.

One can find many surface similarities between the French Revolution and the upheavals which led to the establishment of the modern dictatorships. To read Anatole France's "The Gods Are Athirst," that incomparably lifelike novel of the French Revolution, is to see an accurate picture not only of the spirit but of many of the physical aspects of the Bolshevik regime in Russia in its early phase. There are many episodes of cruelty, fanaticism, and stupidity in the French Revolution that are quite comparable with the worst things that have occurred in Russia, Germany, and Italy.

But in its final effect on the human spirit, on the destiny of Europe, there is a significant contrast between the French Revolution and the three revolutions of our own time. The former, despite many paradoxes, failures, and inconsistencies, did in the long run make for the liberation of the individual human being. The "rights of man" were often observed in the breach during the changing regimes that succeeded one another so rapidly in France, but they were never forgotten.

The main permanent result of the Revolution—not only in France but also, through repercussion, in other European countries—was to sweep away the static privileged society of feudalism, to give free course to the individual. This led to many abuses and excesses. The Revolution in its later stages spawned a host of profiteers. Balzac, the conservative Catholic, who believed that democracy would lead to communism, has given us some unforgettably vivid and bitter portraits of the French new rich, who often, no doubt, compared unfavorably morally and intellectually with the aristocratic rulers of France before 1789.

But when one surveys the nineteenth century, the century of the influence of the French Revolution, as a whole, one cannot miss the fact that here was an epoch of mighty progress in human history. To this epoch of growing individualism belongs an extremely high proportion of achievement in all fields of human thought. In the multiplication of mechanical energy it exceeded the effort of all the preceding centuries from the beginning of time.

And it is difficult to conceive where we should be today in



music, in literature, in philosophy, in history if the intellectual fruits of the last century were suddenly blotted out of our consciousness. Take Russia alone as an illustration. The Russian contribution to civilization before 1800 was negligible. By 1900 it had given the world immortal novelists, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky; great musicians, Moussorgsky, Tschaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov; scientists such as Mendeleev, Metchnikov and Pavlov; personalities like Kropotkin and Tolstoy and Herzen.

Of course development during this century was not a uniform upward march. Right was sometimes, although by no means always, on the scaffold. Wrong was often on the throne. The individualist or capitalist economic system that was replacing feudalism had its cruel and brittle sides. Popular well-being lagged behind the possibilities which were opened up by scientific discovery and technical application.

Yet, viewed in broad perspective, was there any European country that was not better off, on any reasonable standard of comparison, in 1900 than it had been in 1800? Among such standards one might suggest provision of public education, conditions of labor, humanization of penal codes, per capita consumption of food and manufactured goods, maintenance of public health. Who, in this early phase of Europe's second suicidal frenzy within a generation, could predict with confidence that in the year 2000 there could be a similar verdict of progress in relation to 1900?

I doubt whether there was any country in Europe at any time during the nineteenth century where one could reasonably have said: "Civilization would be better off if we could restore things precisely as they were ten or twenty or fifty years ago." How sadly different is the situation today! With full appreciation of the injustices and the decadent aspects of Tsarism, I should have no hesitation in saying that one would have found in the Russia of 1909 more humanity, more individual personality, more creative thought, less avoidable suffering, less degraded living conditions than one would find in the Russia of 1939.

There was a nation-wide movement of protest before the war when an obscure Jew named Beilis was accused of committing ritual murder. (Incidentally, Beilis was acquitted.) There was not, there could not be a murmur of audible protest when large numbers of individuals, including some of the most famous leaders of

the early period of the Revolution, were tried and put to death on accusations that were just as obviously absurd and fraudulent as the ritual murder indictment against Beilis.

If it lay within my power and I were given the alternative between an integral restoration of Tsarism, down to the last brass button on the uniform of the adjutant of His Imperial Majesty and the maintenance of Stalin's despotism, I would unhesitatingly choose the former alternative. Prewar Russia had its limited share in the civilization of Europe. Stalinite Russia, looming up so ominously as the possible winner of the present war, is unadulterated dark, barbarous Asia.

In the same way and for much the same reasons I should consider the slack easy-going Italy that Mussolini took over as a far more civilized and attractive community of human beings than Italy after seventeen years of Blackshirts and castor oil. And who can measure the gulf, in terms of popular well-being, cultural achievement, and standards of humanity and common decency, between either the Imperial or the Republican regime in Germany and the semi-Bolshevik Third Reich?

The present war has followed so closely on the heels of its predecessor<sup>1</sup> that it should inspire no illusions in observers who can view it without wishful thinking and emotional partisanship. In the light of the plain facts of the last two decades, can anyone place faith in the Wilsonian phrases, now being furbished up for new use about war as an agency to end war, to create a better world, to make right and justice prevail? The fruit of the war to make the world safe for democracy was three of the most brutally antidemocratic revolutions in history. The sequel to the war to end war was an era of numerous minor wars and acts of international aggression, culminating in what is essentially a renewal of the World War, with far more terrible means of destruction available to the combatants.

I have no quarrel with antifascists when they paint a gloomy picture of what Europe will be if Nazi Germany wins the war. As a rationalist and an individualist I can scarcely conceive of any-

<sup>1</sup>One reason why the nineteenth century was one of progress was the absence of world-shaking universal wars between the end of the Napoleonic conflicts and the outbreak of the World War. A strong reason for believing that the present century will be one of retrogression is the outbreak of two major wars within the span of a generation.

thing more antipathetic to me personally than Hitler's dictatorship, except its equally brutal and less efficient quasi-ally, the Communist dictatorship in Russia.

Where I do take issue with the trend of official opinion in France and Great Britain and with a good deal of unofficial opinion in America is in refusing to believe that all will be for the best in a happy world if only Hitler is defeated. I was talking with one of my American interventionist friends in Paris shortly after the outbreak of the war. He was blithely predicting five or six years of sanguinary struggle, in which he wished America to supply a good deal of the cannon fodder. I suggested that civilization would not last so long.

"To hell with civilization!" he said. "We're going to beat Hitler."

With all due respect for my friend, a brilliant and well known figure in his field, I could not repress the thought: What a juvenile viewpoint! And how doubly juvenile in view of the recent experience with making the ex-Kaiser the source of all human ills! Is there any reason to believe that the downfall of Hitler will be any surer pledge of the future peace and security of the world than was the deposition of the Kaiser?

Hitler as an individual is negligible. In normal times he would have knocked about at odd jobs and attracted or bored small beer-hall audiences with his half-baked "philosophy." He became formidable as a result of extremely complex forces. One of these is the secular eastward expansionism of the German race. A second is the uneven development of capitalism which left Germany, powerful in industrial technique, in the disciplined intelligence of its people, in soldierly spirit, without adequate sources of supply in raw materials. A third, perhaps most important, is the national instinct for revenge inspired by a peace treaty which was at once too harsh to bring about reconciliation and not harsh enough to eliminate Germany forever from the list of the great powers.

The peace treaty (if there is one) which will follow the present war will be written by men who may have seen their families blown to pieces in air raids. And this will also be true of the leaders of the inevitable movements for social and economic change which will come in the wake of the war. Is it reasonable to expect that the peace treaties of the future will contain more elements of justice, mercy, and enlightened self-interest than that of Versailles,

or that the new social patterns will be more humane than those of communism and fascism?

It is a pity that every responsible European statesman could not have been compelled to read and reread Thucydides' "History of the Peloponnesian War." For here, in a narrative at once spirited and admirably objective, one has the narrative of the long and terrible war in which there were no victors, and in which the end was the breakdown of Greek civilization. There are amazing parallels between Greece, divided into its small city-states, in the fifth century B.C. and the European continent today.

There was the rivalry between the great sea power, Athens, and the great land power, Sparta. There was the same game of power politics, the same series of intrigues and hostile alliances. One can find in Thucydides the same arguments for and against going to the aid of another state that interventionists and isolationists are using in America today. And the long war between the groups of Greek states, which was characterized by frequent betrayals and changes of front among the participants, was aggravated and complicated by savage civil conflicts within the belligerent states. It displayed all the familiar features of modern imperialism and of modern ideological fanaticism.

In the end Greek civilization proved unable to stand the strain of the struggle. Politically and culturally Greece entered a period of decadence. It was unable to resist the pressure first of Macedon, later of Rome. What a fateful and prophetic warning for Europe today! There are several prospective beneficiaries waiting like vultures around carrion to take advantage of Europe's war to an end that will certainly be bitter for all concerned. The most obvious of these beneficiaries are the half Asiatic and wholly barbarous Soviet Union and Japan.

Perhaps the most disastrous and permanent result of the war will prove to be the westward expansion of the territorial possessions and influence of the Soviet Union, that implacable enemy of everything individualistic and humanistic in the European cultural tradition. Within a few weeks after the outbreak of hostilities some thirteen million unfortunate human beings—Poles, White Russians, and Ukrainians—had been brought under Stalin's rule, while the freedom of several little peasant democracies in the Baltic had been destroyed or gravely threatened.

The responsibility before history of the European statesmen who

bid against each other for Soviet support is very heavy; it is like that of the Byzantine Greeks who, in their internal brawls, brought the Turks into Europe. Hitler, of course, is primarily responsible for this ominous penetration of the Soviet legions into the heart of Central Europe; but France had already concluded a pact with the Soviet Union, which the latter, in its habitual tradition, betrayed at the first opportunity. And the Hitler-Stalin agreement of August 24 and its following agreements, with their renunciation of Germany's historic interests in the Baltic area, might never have been concluded if it had not been for the ill advised British and French overtures to Moscow in the spring and summer of 1939.

What a commentary on the decadence of democratic statesmanship that it was left to Stalin to recognize an axiomatic truth that Chamberlain and Daladier missed! This was that the countries which remained aloof from the war, or on its outer fringes, in the beginning stood the best chance of being the final victors. Coolly, cunningly, foresightedly Stalin focused his whole tortuous policy on a single objective: the promotion of war between Germany, on one side, and Great Britain and France, on the other. And, to the lasting misfortune of our civilization, he succeeded.

Why could not Chamberlain and Daladier have realized that the sole hopeful chance of saving the democracy and individualism which they both cherished was to canalize Hitler eastward? Why did they not possess as much elementary statecraft as the Roman and Byzantine Emperors, who were always careful to keep the barbarians fighting among one another? Instead of this, by throwing themselves on the modern Goths, the Nazis, Great Britain and France merely played the game of the modern Sarmatians, the Soviet Communists, who will loom up as a fresh and formidable enemy if and when the Goths are disposed of.

Unquestionably the strongest factor that is now holding up the morale of the French and British peoples at the front and behind the lines is the belief that they are fighting for permanent peace. I know this from personal experience in France, from talks with soldiers at the front and with women and old men in Paris. And no doubt it is equally true in England.

I wish I could share this faith in a relatively simple and easy way out of the world's tragic impasse. I wish I could believe that the overthrow of Hitler would mark the beginning of a period of permanent peace and civilized living. If I could believe this my

attitude toward the war would be entirely different. I might even reconcile myself, although with great difficulty, to the idea that America should enter the conflict.

But the probabilities seem to me to lie overwhelmingly in a contrary direction. Specific prophecy is always dangerous. But what is the prospect that Great Britain and France will face if, after three years, to take the British estimate of the length of the war, they succeed in crushing Germany? Millions of men will have been killed and wounded. Thousands of ships will have been sunk. Scores of once beautiful cities and towns will have been visited by death and destruction from the air. But it will be a sword, not peace that the war-weary peoples will find at the end of this *Via Dolorosa*.

For Stalin, whose early acquisitions offer only a slight foretaste of his ultimate ambitions, will then be able to step in with a fresh army and all the poison gas of his propaganda. Contemptible and ineffective in normal times, this propaganda, as experience has shown, operates most powerfully on the masses when they have been driven almost to hysteria by the sufferings of war.

The original war objective, the defense and restoration of Poland, obviously cannot be realized unless the Soviet Union is also conquered. It will not be merely a question of the eastern provinces of Poland, which have already been seized, with the familiar Bolshevik accompaniment of killing large numbers of people marked out by culture, breeding, and religious faith. As soon as Germany breaks down, the Red Army will be in a position to seize the whole of Poland and much more in the Balkans besides.

Germany itself, to avoid another and sterner Versailles, may well go Communist; Hitler has already brought it a good part of the way. The specter of 1918 and 1919, when revolution and counter-revolution fought in Germany, would become a reality. Great Britain and France, already strained to the uttermost, would find themselves confronted by a hostile land mass stretching from the Rhine to the Pacific. And this time Russia would not be the broken, chaotic country of 1918 and 1919, torn by civil war and quite unable to act outside its own frontiers.

No, all the omens are decidedly against any simple "happy ending" of the present war. Europe is faced with the prospect of an indefinite cycle of wars and revolutions, each perhaps more senseless than the one which preceded it, each dragging civilization to

a lower level. The fatal vicious circle is already clear for anyone with eyes to see. The World War spawned communism and fascism. Fascism and communism, in their turn, brought on the Second World War.

It was perhaps the insight of the former teacher of history, Edouard Daladier, that inspired the prediction, voiced in his letter to Hitler, that barbarism and destruction would be the surest victors in a new war. What a tragic irony that Premier Daladier should have felt obliged to call his countrymen to give their lives, with such a gloomy prospect at the end!

During the World War there were two possibilities that might have afforded some hope that the lives laid down in such scenes of carnage as Verdun and the Somme might not have been sacrificed in vain. There was the hope, voiced by Wilson, of a community of nations which might lay the basis of a new world order, without hostile alliances and balance-of-power politics, where war could be eliminated. It was a noble ideal, but the history of the last two decades has been the record of its complete frustration. The impotence to which the League of Nations had fallen was eloquently reflected in the fact that, when the war actually broke out, no one troubled to ask what the League thought about it.

One may dispute as to the causes of the failure of this experiment in international co-operation. One may blame American abstention, or the character of the Versailles Treaty, or French unwillingness to trust Germany, or German untrustworthiness, or Italian and Japanese violence. The fundamental causes, I think, lie deeper. They are linked up with the general decline of European civilization which I shall discuss later. But the failure is there, complete and absolute.

The other ideal which, during the World War, might have seemed to hold out some prospect of a pacific, civilized world order was that of socialism. As some people found an immediate devil, responsible for the World War, in the Kaiser, others found it in the capitalist system. By putting together some of the facts about imperialism, the struggle for markets, the profits of munition makers it was easy to construct a theory that capitalism, the system of production for private profit, was responsible for war. Destroy capitalism, and war would cease.

It seemed as simple as this to Lenin, who may dispute with Hitler the right to be considered the greatest revolutionary of our age.

Because he and his associates (honest men, with a few unimportant exceptions; the breed of Stalinite robots had not yet appeared) believed with consuming passion that the capitalist system was responsible for the unprecedented slaughter of the World War, the cruelties of their own anticapitalist revolution were transfigured and justified in their eyes.

But the whole record of the Soviet Union—its attempt to conquer Poland in 1920, its more successful effort to share the spoils of that unfortunate country with Hitler in 1939, its unprovoked invasion of Finland, its bloodless conquest, in the best Hitler technique, of the Baltic States, its smashing of independent Georgia, its subjugation of Outer Mongolia, to mention only a few cases—completely refutes the idea that a socialist economic order is any guaranty against an aggressive foreign policy. Indeed it is just in those countries where “capitalism,” or economic individualism, enjoys freest play that sentiment for peace proved strongest in the years which immediately preceded the outbreak of the Second World War.

Every attempt to realize the socialist ideal has proved a failure. In Russia, where the experiment went furthest, the failure has been a catastrophe. Its most conspicuous achievements have been two great famines, the creation of a vast system of serf labor under subhuman living conditions, the establishment of a regime of systematic terrorism unmatched either under Tsarism or under the fascist states, and the final evolution of a revolutionary dictatorship into an irresponsible personal despotism, quite devoid of any ideological basis.

One finds far more economic elements of socialism in Nazi Germany and in Fascist Italy than in democratic countries. But these forms of what might well be called bastard socialism have proved the most effective means of preparing peoples, economically as well as spiritually, for a constant state of war-in-peace which easily advances into actual war.

There still remains the progressive democratic type of socialism, represented by the British Labor party and by the Socialist parties of France and some of the smaller European countries; but, except perhaps in Scandinavia, this type of socialism has not proved very creative. It has been handicapped by the feud with the Communists and with smaller dissident groups. It has not developed sufficient strength either to stop war or to exercise a decisive influence on



peace settlements. And this type of moderate, pacific socialism went down completely before the gangster onslaughts of Russian Communists, Italian Fascists, and German Nazis.

This is an age of cynical nihilism, of frustration of all ideals. The two strongest new postwar ideologies were communism and fascism; and each of these betrayed its own professed principles, in the name of which so much blood had been shed, when Moscow and Berlin concluded their deal at the expense of Poland. In the light of this new unholy alliance Hitlerism and Stalinism stand exposed as completely opportunist dictatorships, animated only by lust for power and plunder and dissociated from any social or economic ideas, even perverted and mistaken ones. The Communist and Nazi regimes now appear as devoid of any coherent consistent body of principles as the predatory Goths and Vandals, with whom, indeed, they possess disconcertingly many traits in common.

What a dismal series of triumphs of fanaticism, ignorance, and brutality over reason, culture, and humanity Europe has witnessed during the last two decades! What an irony it lends to the last sentence of the autobiography of Henry Adams, who lived in what seems in retrospect such a safe, sheltered, civilized epoch of world history:

Perhaps some day—say 1938, their centenary<sup>1</sup>—they might be allowed to return together for a holiday, to see the mistakes of their own lives made clear in the light of the mistakes of their successors; and perhaps then, for the first time since man began his education among the carnivores, they would find a world that sensitive and timid natures could regard without a shudder.

1938. Without a shudder. Japanese airplanes bombing from one end of China to the other. Spain in the last throes of savage civil war. Nazis overrunning two small civilized states. The endless martyrdom of German Jews and of the Russians of all classes who fall under Stalin's displeasure. The Holy Land of three religions torn with the feud of Arab and Jew. . . .

It is high time, I think, to put aside hopeful illusions. European civilization is in an unmistakable process of deterioration and decay, symbolized in an ever growing cult of violence in the settlement of international and internal disputes, a violence that becomes

<sup>1</sup> Adams was imagining the return to earth of himself and of two old friends, who had also been born in 1838.

more and more unmotivated. Far from arresting this trend, the present war can only greatly accelerate it. Nothing brings a democratic country so swiftly to dictatorial conditions as the existence of a state of war. It is not only the street lamps that are dimmed in the democratic capitals.

Censorship, suspension of normal freedom of discussion, installation of industrial and financial controls very similar to those of the totalitarian states—these things are much easier to introduce and to perfect than to withdraw. It is safe to predict that such limited right of criticism as still exists (more in England than in France) will disappear as the war becomes fiercer and more pitiless.

If one takes the long view, the only correct perspective from which to view major historical developments, one is struck by the similarities between the Europe of today and the Greece of Thucydides. And the judgment which history has passed on Greece will also probably apply to Europe. No one cares now about the Blue Books, White Books, Yellow Books, and other apologia which Athens and Sparta may have issued to prove themselves in the right. No one worries overmuch as to who was the aggressor at Potidaea or whether the commons or the nobles at Corcyra had the better legal case. What is important is that a great civilization tore itself to pieces in a long agony of war and revolution. It is in such an agony, with only short deceptive respites, that Europe has been since 1914. And during that period of twenty years there has been no creative saving idea in thought, in politics, in economics. The great changes have all been for the worse.

Another period with which Europe's condition suggests comparison is the fifth century after Christ, when the decline of the Roman Empire culminated in its fall. There is no greater mistake than to imagine that the curve of human development is always in an upward direction. Think of the contrast between the intellectual circle of Cicero or Seneca and the court of some Merovingian king of the sixth or seventh century where the monarch could not write his own name. Or compare Athens at the time of Plato and Athens under Turkish rule, or Rome in the age of Marcus Aurelius and the medieval Rome of brawling, stabbing gangsters.

Gibbon, himself the product of a period that believed in progress and enlightenment, after describing the barbarian conquest of the decaying empire, put the question whether Europe was still exposed to such invasions. He reassured himself with a negative

answer on the ground that barbarians could not conquer Europe without first becoming civilized themselves. But one fears that the great historian overlooked the possible emergence of a species that is very much alive and rampant at the present time: the anthropoid ape mounted on a tank or armed with a machine gun.

Europe now seems destined for a long series of wars and revolutions. It can scarcely be imagined that it can retain its former place in world affairs after such a suicidal ordeal. There has been, after all, something artificial in Europe's predominant position on the world stage. It has rested on a superiority in military and industrial technique which is not necessarily eternal, especially if the European continent is periodically torn with devastating wars and their retrogressive consequences in everything from man power to economics. It is the intangible element of prestige, as much as actual physical power, that accounts for the privileged position of the European in many Asiatic and African colonies and semi-colonies. And nothing is so destructive of prestige as a prolonged and difficult war.

War is a tremendous accelerator of violent and subversive processes. One must reckon to the account of the first World War not only three major revolutions in Europe but a vast ferment of unrest among yellow and brown and black men from China to Morocco.

In the Orient the legend of white superiority, shaken by the Japanese victory over Russia in 1904-1905, was very largely destroyed by two immediate results of the World War. One of these was the breach in the previous white solidarity, the hounding of the Germans out of China, the taking away of their extraterritorial rights. The other was the appearance in Manchuria, China, and Japan of tens of thousands of penniless Russian refugees, the men sometimes begging or performing menial work such as white men had never performed in the East, the women sometimes becoming concubines of the Chinese.

All this had its effect in stimulating the anti-Western Chinese revolutionary movement of 1925-1927. This was checked by two extraneous developments: the cleavage between conservative and communist elements among the Chinese revolutionaries and the Asiatic civil war between Japan and China which began in 1937. But an accommodation between Japan and China, on the basis of driving the white man from the Orient, is not outside the bounds of possibility; and one wonders whether the stability of

the great British, French, and Dutch colonial empires can be assured in the event of a prolonged war, even regardless of its issue. What, for instance, would become of the vast Dutch East Indies if Germany should march into the Netherlands? The Japanese Navy probably has some ideas on this subject.

At the very least, much that gave support and character to the individualistic civilization of Europe seems certain to disappear under the impact of war. The British national debt increased roughly tenfold during the World War. Can it stand another gigantic increase without financial collapse, with its accompaniments of inflation and repudiation and all the grave social consequences which these would entail? The French franc, worth twenty cents in gold before the first World War, is now worth a little over two cents in terms of the present devalued American dollar. What will it be worth after the end of the present war?

The belligerent nations must reckon with cruel losses, economic as well as human, in the form of lost markets, bankrupt investments, destroyed shipping and property. The range of possible destruction is widened by the development of aircraft. And no one, I imagine, after the experiences of "reparations" after the last conflict, would be foolish enough to believe that the vanquished can be effectively forced to repay these losses. The final and permanent victory will be that of the graveyard and the desert, of hunger, pestilence, and social chaos.

I return again to what seems to me the amazing shortsightedness of feeling that nothing matters except beating "Hitlerism." "Hitlerism" is only one aspect, perhaps not the most important aspect of the general disease that has overtaken European civilization. If there were only three countries in the world, Germany, Great Britain, and France, the two latter might set out to crush a restlessly expansionist regime in Germany with some reasonable hope that this would mean permanent peace.

But the actual situation is infinitely more complicated. Shortly after I arrived in Paris, in the spring of 1939, I delivered a talk at an American club in which I predicted that the Soviet Union and Japan would be the only prospective victors in a European war. I see no reason to alter this prediction, now that the war has begun.

Apart from the Communist challenge in Europe and the Japanese challenge in Asia, the Western powers, bled white after a war which gives no prospect of being short and easy, will be faced

with other problems: social unrest at home, intensified nationalist strivings in their colonies.

I am sometimes surprised at the reaction which these pessimistic perspectives arouse in Americans to whom I talk. There is a confused feeling that America should "do something about it," perhaps in the best style of the crusade of 1917, designed to make the world safe for democracy to the tune of "Over There." My own conclusions as to America's proper role is entirely different. It seems to me that any statesman who would directly or indirectly work for American involvement in what is not a single war but simply an episode in a long series of wars and revolutions would incur a crushing responsibility before history and before his own conscience. The spectacle of a great civilization in decline must arouse our deepest grief; but there is nothing we can effectively do to avert it.

America does not possess the infinite power or the infinite wisdom that are supposed to be the attributes of Almighty Providence. It is first of all beyond our physical power, unless we propose to out-Hitler Hitler in militarization, with all the disastrous consequences which this would entail for our democratic ideal, to put every obstreperous nation in Europe and Asia into what we regard as its proper place. And, even apart from this very important consideration, America seems to me singularly ill adapted for the role of world judge and arbiter.

Because we are a young people our judgments are likely to be intolerant and impatient, naive and half-baked. We are clay in the hands of a skillful propagandist from one of the older lands of Europe with designs on our men and our money. We succumb far too easily to thinking of complicated world developments in oversimplified terms of "menaces" against which we must go out and fight. This is one side of our character. There is another and more hopeful side. There is a solid bedrock of common sense that has kept some of our adventurous amateur diplomats and statesmen from plunging us too deeply into the quarrels of Europe and Asia. Just because he is not an expert on the precise state of Chinese and Japanese rights in Manchuria before 1931 or on the ethnological frontiers between Germans, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Ruthenes, and Magyars the average American has a sound instinct to leave these matters alone. No matter how much propaganda may be brought to bear on him, he knows that America's frontiers are the

Atlantic and the Pacific, not the Rhine or the Vistula or the Yangtze.

It may prove to have been wishful thinking, but I do not believe there is anything fatalistically preordained about American entrance in the present war. Our national destiny, properly conceived, would be to keep our own hemisphere free from aggressive foreign penetration (a big enough job even for an ambitious people), to work out our own great problem of insuring that mechanical progress will mean work and a steadily rising standard of living for all, to take the lead in the relief enterprises that will be only too necessary throughout Europe's ordeal. The argument is sometimes used that American economy will be so much affected by the war that participation will become ultimately inevitable. This seems to me open to the obvious retort that whatever losses may be incurred by staying out of war will be negligible, compared with those which will be entailed by going in. Moreover, the costs of remaining aloof would be only material. The costs of entering war would have to be measured in human lives and in greatly increased liability to reactionary modifications of our democratic and individualistic system.

Where did Europe miss its way? What were the causes of the decline in our century after the progress of the last? What was the fatal moment when the ascending phase of the glorious civilization of the nineteenth century ceased? The fact of the decline is easier to establish than its causes.

Suppose it were possible, by some magical effort of human will, to restore the world precisely as it was in 1913. Is there anyone, except possibly the jobholders of the communist and fascist regimes, who would not see in this prospect an infinite blessing, who would not gladly sacrifice the inventions and comforts and luxuries of the last two and a half decades for the sake of a world that had been spared two major wars and innumerable minor ones, three destructive revolutions, accompanied by unprecedented tyranny over the human mind and barbarous maltreatment of class, race, and political minorities? Who would not be glad to ride in an old-fashioned automobile, if only the tank had not been invented? Who would not find trains fast enough as means of conveyance, if only the danger of airplanes dropping their explosive and incendiary bombs could be forever banished?

The date of the beginning of the decline of European civiliza-

tion can easily be set. It is August 1, 1914. Much more difficult and complex is the task of analyzing its causes. Even the great Gibbon, in his marvelous narrative of the decline and fall of Imperial Rome, nowhere gives a clear-cut explanation of the main causes of this tremendous event. If it is obviously not easy to extract from old chroniclers the deeper reasons of the occurrences which they describe, it is perhaps still less easy to analyze with any assurance a catastrophe that is taking place before one's eyes. A short perspective is always apt to be blurred and distorted.

Sometime, perhaps, I shall be able to devote years of study and research to the task, at once gloomy and fascinating, of trying to interpret Europe's decline. Now I will only attempt to suggest, very tentatively, a few of its more obvious causes.

Europe's greatest weakness has been its failure to realize its essential unity. There is something grotesque, anomalous, impossible, in such a limited geographical area, in the existence of so many states, large and small, bristling with bellicose nationalism, political and economic, especially in the face of such large natural units as the United States, the Soviet Union, the British Empire and perhaps the great Asiatic empire which Japan is building up. Europe maintained the politics of the eighteenth century when the whole trend of twentieth century economics and industrial technique called for greater union and interdependence.

The European forces that should have made for peace, the many international associations, political, cultural, scientific, that stretched across frontier lines were too weak to counteract the dark forces that made for ultimate catastrophe, pathological nationalism, competition in armaments, power politics, expressed in hostile alliances, diplomacy that worked in the dark. There was a most lamentable and shortsighted failure on the part of the ruling classes in all countries to realize that overhead costs of modern totalitarian war are so great that, while there may be vanquished, there can be no victors. The penalty of defeat is revolution.

There was a striking and ominous chasm between the material progress which was made possible by scientific discovery and invention and the moral and cultural development of the human race. The same impersonal amoral physical science has made possible the elimination of epidemics and the prodigious destruction of air bombing.

There was something ephemeral and brittle as well as brilliant about the new industrial era. It did not strike the solid roots of the feudal system. With its alternations of boom and slump, its rapid changes of fortune, it imparted to human existence a more artificial, more hectic, less stable character. The prosperity of the nineteenth century was largely bound up with the tapping of new markets, the opening up of new frontiers. As these sources of stimulus disappeared new problems, for which no adequate solution has yet been found, arose in connection with the distribution of goods. Europe's privileged position during the nineteenth century was largely based on a supremacy in industrial technique which, in the nature of things, was certain to be challenged as former markets for manufactured goods became industrialized.

A very important cause of friction, which has become especially marked during the last decade, was the unequal development of capitalism. This, in turn, may be attributed partly to differences in the natural wealth of various countries, partly to the disadvantages faced by certain countries which achieved national unity or world contacts later than others. It is not the result of accident or of a peculiarly heavy dose of original sin that three countries which arrived late on the imperialist stage, Germany, Italy, and Japan, have shown themselves restlessly aggressive.

These have-not powers have exaggerated their grievances for propagandist effect. The remedy which they have sought, violent conquest, is open to moral objections, is of doubtful economic expediency, and threatens in the long run to bring them into conflicts which threaten their national existence. But the handicaps of a numerous energetic people, living in a relatively constricted area and poor in markets and sources of raw material under its own sovereignty, are genuine. And this is especially true in the postwar age, with its numerous restrictions on the free movements of immigrants, goods, and capital. One restriction breeds another, and the stresses and strains in the edifice of international trade and investment became progressively more severe.

At first the modern industrial system favored individualism and democracy. But with its development came impersonal collectivist tendencies. The simplest most workable form of democracy, which one can see in a very fine form in Switzerland today, is that of a community of small owners, farmers, handicraftsmen, small business



men, where there are no serious lines of class cleavage and no striking differences of wealth.

With the growth of millionaires at one end of the social scale and slums at the other, with the springing up of big combinations of capital and their natural counterpart, powerful labor organizations, the individual tends to become squeezed between pressure groups. Individual liberty is threatened, and the preservation of democracy becomes a much more complex and difficult affair; and, as the experience of the last two decades shows, democracy becomes increasingly vulnerable to attack not from old-fashioned conservatism, very much weakened as a political and social force, but from such demagogic perversions of the democratic idea as communism and fascism.

Europe's time of grace, I suspect, was before 1914. The World War let loose so many germs of hatred, folly, wrong, and injustice that there was no time to recover from it before its successor was already upon the stricken Continent. There was no real peace after the great catastrophe of 1914-1918, only an uncertain truce. Mutual hatred and suspicion made the task of creating a new international order almost hopeless from the beginning.

In retrospect I think the unsuccessful peacemakers of Versailles committed two capital blunders, among many minor mistakes. The first was to create an embittered proletarian "nothing to lose" psychology, the psychological prelude to the desperate adventurism of the Third Reich, in Germany by the confiscation of so much German private property and by the fantastically unworkable reparations arrangements. The second was in failing to smash the Soviet system in Russia, that declared enemy of individualist civilization, while it was still weak. This could easily have been done if the anti-Bolshevik leaders had been helped as energetically and efficiently as Franco was helped in Spain. But when a process of decline is in full course it is perhaps useless to dwell on isolated mistakes and "might-have-beens."

One more point should be noted among the many danger signals for individual liberty. The progress of science has served tyranny well in creating the modern weapons that give large industrially advanced states such a cruel advantage in wars against weaker neighbors. A generation ago it would have taken Italy many years to conquer Abyssinia and months, if not years, to occupy Albania. Without aviation Japan's range of destruction in China would have

been limited. It was only because of its tanks and airplanes that Germany could overrun Poland in three weeks.

Some of the noblest pages in history, describing the resistance of small peoples to powerful invaders, could never have been written if air and mechanized weapons had existed throughout all time. These weapons are a double menace to liberty. They make it appallingly easy for the large state to crush its smaller neighbor. They also make it possible for a ruling clique in a dictatorship to dispose very quickly and efficiently of any movement of popular revolt.

Is there any hope for Europe's future? I am afraid the omens almost all point to the twentieth century as an age of retrogression, of decline to constantly lower levels, culturally and materially, through a more and more disorderly and senseless series of wars and revolutions. But the medieval legend on which Wagner based his opera "Tannhäuser" tells of a withered staff that put forth fresh blossoms after the Pope had cursed the repentant Tannhäuser and declared that redemption was no more possible than the blossoming of his own staff.

Should such a miracle occur, should the glorious civilization of the old Continent, almost extinguished in some of its largest countries and gravely threatened everywhere, experience a renaissance I can conceive only one form which this could assume. There must be a new universal consciousness of the sacred value of individual personality, so terribly obliterated in war and in the serf states which the last war produced. The revolutions which grew out of the World War were all pointed in the wrong direction, increasing the power of that unholy monster, the state, to grotesque proportions.

There is a chance—a very faint chance, I am afraid—that the revolutions, violent or peaceful, which must follow the new war will be of a different character, individualist rather than collectivist. There is just the shadow of a possibility that the plain people everywhere will rebel at last against the sanguinary game of which they are always the victims, that they will set up a new order in which would-be dictators will be shot at sight and conscription and balance-of-power politics and competitive armaments and all the other toys with which politicians and diplomats and generals like to play until they go off in the ultimately inevitable explosion will be banished forever. It is only on this basis of a free

United States of Europe, the product of free men firmly and implacably resolved never again to be misled into the dark and bloody insanity of war and prepared to make the infinitely lesser sacrifices which permanent peace would require, that the present century in Europe may be an epoch not of servitude and barbarism, but of freedom and rebirth.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN: *Personal Credo*

*Everyone, consciously or unconsciously,* lives by some personal credo, by some standard of values, by some likes and dislikes. When I try to sum up my own profession of faith, the main articles shape up as follows:

I believe most deeply and passionately in the creative value of human liberty, without which life seems to me devoid of meaning and savor. I could never for one moment remain the citizen, or rather the subject, of a communist or fascist state. The implication of this belief in the value of freedom is a deeply rooted distrust of any too assertive power and authority.

I believe in the absolute right of the individual human personality to full and free expression, subject always to the reservation that the rights of other personalities are not infringed. In any conflict between the individual and the state, the church, the family, society, or any other more or less impersonal corporate body, my sympathies are always instinctively with the individual.

I believe in the validity of human reason—a poor guide, perhaps, but the best we have—against any kind of self-styled revealed dogma, religious, political, or economic.

I believe that power is the most evil thing in the world: its effect on character is almost always corrupting and vulgarizing. One cannot unfortunately get on altogether without it; in a complicated modern society life would become impossible without some elements of authority and direction. But I am, on principle, in favor of placing as many restraints as possible on the exercise of power, whether by the state or by the private employer.

I believe that civil liberties, at which it is fashionable for “ad-

vanced" thinkers to sneer, are a most integral element in civilization. In fact I think the extent to which these liberties are preserved is an infallible touchstone for the quality of civilization in any state.

With a profound personal distaste for either giving or receiving peremptory orders, I believe in a kind of mild anarchism as the ideal state, where it would always be possible to tweak the nose of authority, should it become too pompous or too self-righteous. In referring to anarchism I would stress the qualifying adjective "mild." Carlyle once referred disparagingly to the liberal ideal of "anarchy plus a police constable." To me this seems an extremely happy formula: a state strong enough to maintain internal order, but not strong enough to carry on wars, carry out wholesale executions and banishments, and perform the other deviltries to which the strong state is prone.

I believe that individual man's instinct is to create, while collective man's instinct is to destroy. To individual man we owe Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Shakespeare's "Hamlet," Raphael's Madonna. To collective man, organized in a mob or a party, we are indebted for lynchings, pogroms, "liquidations" of undesired classes. Everything mean and contemptible in human nature, cruelty, cowardice, stupidity, finds fullest expression in the mob. It is on human beings forcibly organized into permanent mobs that the contemporary fascist-communist technique of government depends.

I believe that individuals, by and large, are immensely better than the corporate organizations (states, parties, armies, and what not) in which they allow themselves to be trapped. I have a fair first-hand knowledge of the Russian, German, and Japanese peoples. Not one Russian in a hundred, left to himself, would have gone about driving peasant women and children from their homes, packing them into freight cars, sending great numbers of them to certain death. Not one German in a hundred, on his own initiative, would have assaulted, plundered, maltreated his Jewish neighbor. And the typical Japanese farmer or fisherman, a hard-working, self-respecting, kindly human being, is not the beast in uniform of Nanking and many other captured Chinese cities. "The coldest of all cold monsters is the state." Nietzsche never said a truer word.

In the light of these beliefs I think there has been a fair measure of consistency in my reactions to the various countries and events and movements with which I have come into contact. My most

serious deviation from the ideal of individual libertarianism was in those far-off days in New York when I surreptitiously supported the Bolshevik cause in the *New York Call* and *Soviet Russia*; but at that time I saw Russia as the country where the people had rebelled against the supreme tyranny of war, not as the future dictatorship, based on a terrorist police, a huge army, and a swollen bureaucracy.

At first sight my record seems to have been one of consistent espousal of unpopular causes, from the time when I created a scandal among the grave elders of Fifth Day Meeting by denouncing compulsory church attendance at Haverford. I was antiwar when America was crusading to make the world safe for democracy. I was pro-Bolshevik at a time when Bolshevism, to the average American, meant first of all nationalization of women. I became anti-Communist just at the time when a considerable number of left-wing intellectuals in America and elsewhere had come around to the belief that the Soviet system of planned economy, of the actual workings of which they were profoundly ignorant, was the hope of the world. And I am a firm isolationist, as regards American participation in any war that is not clearly dictated by the needs of national defense against direct attack, at a time when the war propaganda mills are again beginning to grind.

I do not think this frequent identification with the unpopular side of some disputed question is the result of mere contrariness. It is rather due to the fact that I am one of the dwindling number of liberals and individualists in a world that is being more and more shaped along collectivist lines.

What I resent above everything is to see human beings mobilized, in war or in peace, conscripted in body and mind, used as cannon fodder, as instruments for realizing the will of some dictator or ruling group. Any public work, however imposing it may be, that has been built by forced labor is to me tainted at the source. And, while this tendency to treat individuals as will-less pawns, to be set at forced labor, deported, sent into the trenches at the will of their masters, is especially strong in the dictatorial countries, there are also dangerous tendencies in this direction in the democratic countries. What is profoundly discouraging to me is the ease with which some men in responsible positions bring themselves to regard with favor the idea of war, not on some clear-cut issue of national defense, but for some consideration of ideologi-

cal sympathy or some paper scheme of world order. My sympathies are always with the unknown soldiers who do the fighting and dying, not with the manipulators who set the combatant machines in motion.

Civilization, as I conceive it, is the product of individuals, not of masses—and certainly not of tyrants and demagogues. It would be easy to compose a list of one hundred men of genius—philosophers, artists, writers, musicians, scientists, inventors—who have contributed more to the cultural enrichment and material progress of the human race than a hundred million ordinary people.

This is why the present trend toward the extinction of individualism is such a serious portent for the future of civilization. It would be difficult to name a creative thinker (except in the naturally neutral field of science) in the Soviet Union or in Germany or in Italy today. There are, of course, Russian and German and Italian creative thinkers; but they are in exile. It is almost impossible to conceive what a blight the continued existence of the totalitarian pattern will lay on the future of European culture.

An inevitable corollary of my individualistic interpretation of life is absolute rejection of any form of race, class, color, or caste prejudice. The "proletarian" snobbery of the Soviet Union, the Nordic snobbery of Germany, the less destructive but equally silly class snobbery of politically democratic England are all equally alien and repugnant to me.

I am naturally of a rather placid, perhaps phlegmatic disposition, but one thing sometimes reduces me to a state of incoherent, gasping, sputtering rage; and that is meddlesome bureaucratic interference with some simple harmless action, whether my own or someone else's. One occasion in Russia when I completely lost my temper was when I saw some bumptious young Communists enforcing a silly rule (which was subsequently rescinded) that all movement on the sidewalks of Moscow must be in one direction. Whenever some poor old peasant woman would start to swim against the tide, to walk in the opposite direction to that of the majority of the pedestrians, she would be held up, lectured, and dragged over to the other side of the street. We were driving to the station to set out on a trip, and I leaned back in the droshky and relieved my feelings by invoking blessings on General Mannerheim in Finland, Admiral Horthy in Hungary, Gustav Noske in Germany, and everyone else who had smashed communism hard in

its incipient stage and thereby prevented the emergence of such meddling tyranny over every form of human activity, of which the regimentation of pedestrians was only a very mild but characteristic symbol.

It was my Russian experience, supplemented and reinforced by subsequent residence in Germany, that made me an enthusiast for every guaranty of personal liberty contained in the Bill of Rights and the American Constitution. Freedom is like air: one is most conscious of its absence when it is absent. *Habeas cadaver*, which, as a witty journalistic colleague remarked, is the first principle of Soviet jurisprudence, made me much more appreciative of *habeas corpus*.

Believing, as I do, that the state is made for man, not man for the state, that the human being is an end in himself, not simply a means to be used as cannon fodder at the will of his rulers, what kind of political, economic, and social order is most desirable? Here I do not wish to succumb to the typically youthful quest for certainty and moral judgment of my twelve-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, who is constantly perplexing me with such questions as:

“Which government is better, the Japanese or the French? Who is worse, Stalin or Hitler?”

It is pretty obvious from experience that institutions which work well in Europe and North America are often inapplicable in Asia, in Africa, in South America. But if one takes the part of the world that during the last century has been, by any reasonable comparative standard, the most highly civilized, the Euro-American part, I should unhesitatingly say that political democracy, associated with a predominantly individualist economic order, has proved the most promising means of insuring the best material conditions for the greatest number of people, the highest cultural standards, and the least objectionable functioning of the state.

What is most to be feared is the concentration of power. Give absolute authority, political or economic, or both, to any small group of men (it is quite immaterial whether they call themselves Communists, Fascists, or something else), and the stage is set for disaster. There is no more costly or demonstrable fallacy—as many Russians, Germans, and Italians can testify—than to imagine that it is possible to purchase security by surrendering liberty.

Unfortunately, in the declining and disorderly world of the present time, the practical choice is often not between a good and



a bad form of society but between a bad and a worse one. If I were compelled to choose which of the three postwar dictatorships I should spend my life under I should consider the Italian the least objectionable, because the least sanguinary of the three. And, although a liberal by personal preference, I frankly prefer old-fashioned conservatism to communism or fascism. If Elizabeth pushed me into a corner with her questions, I should admit a preference for the Japanese regime or for Franco's dictatorship in Spain (so long as it does not assume a 100 per cent fascist character) to Soviet Russia or Nazi Germany. There is at least somewhat more decency, honor, even respect for individual personality, in the conservative brand of authoritarianism than in the fascist-communist type. Not in spite but because of the fact that I am a liberal, I am an antirevolutionary at a time when every major revolutionary trend seems to me to be pulling down civilization to lower levels. Our old civilization, mainly derived from Europe, has been on the defensive since the World War. I am afraid its final fall is heralded in the outbreak of the Second World War.

It is often argued that the liberal individualist economic order has outlived its time, that society can find salvation only in the Gospel according to St. Marx. But I think, not least because of my long residence in Moscow, that there are the strongest reasons for doubting the validity of the Marxist interpretation of history, economics, and human life. Indeed, of all the men who have been revered as infallible prophets, few have committed themselves to so many demonstrable errors as has Karl Marx. One reason for this is that Marx's kingdom is entirely of this world, so that his claims and statements are all verifiable in the light of mundane reason and observation. Curiously enough it was a professing Communist in the Russian provincial town of Krasnodar who, quite innocently and unconsciously, directed my attention to one of Marx's basic mistakes. Sonya and I had called on him with a letter of introduction from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. He stared at us morosely for a few minutes and then burst out:

"Marx said that revolution must come first in the most highly developed capitalist countries. America is more developed than we are. But there is no American revolution. What's the matter with you Americans anyway?"

Here he had touched on one of the cardinal fallacies of Marxist dogma, although, in the characteristic fashion of the devout be-

liever, he threw the blame on the unknown Americans and not on the prophet. For one of the most vivid passages in "Capital" lays down the rule that socialism can come to pass only as a result of a long process of capitalist development:

While there is a progressive diminution in the number of capitalist magnates, there occurs a corresponding increase in the mass of poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration and exploitation. But at the same time there is a steady intensification of the wrath of the working class—a class which grows ever more numerous, and is disciplined, unified and organized by the very mechanism of the capitalist method of production. Capitalist monopoly becomes a fetter on the method of production which has flourished with it and under it. The centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labor reach a point where they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. This bursts asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

Every feature of this prophecy has been refuted by the subsequent course of events. England, the country where Marx made his dolorous prediction of the increasing misery of the working class under capitalism, supports its unemployed today better than it supported most of its employed workers at the time when "Capital" was written. Of the three most advanced capitalist countries—which, according to Marx, should have been most ripe for socialism—two, Great Britain and the United States, show no sign of bursting their "capitalist husks." The third, Germany, has undergone a revolution, but not of the kind which Marx would have recognized as authentically socialist.

Marx's symmetrical formula of human development—first slave economy, then feudalism, then capitalism, then socialism—has broken down in practice in its last stage. He tells us in his "Critique of Political Economy":

No form of society declines before it has developed all the forces of production in accordance with its own stage of development, and new and higher productive relations never take the place of the old before the material conditions for their existence have been developed within the shell of the old society itself.

But, as it happens, the only large country which has given Marx's ideas an experimental work-out, Russia, was conspicuously backward in capitalist development, at the time of the Revolution.

It had certainly not exhausted all the possibilities of its capitalist phase of development.

To me it is something of a comfort to reflect that if European civilization must fall, as seems only too probable, the process will not be according to the formulas of Marx. For I can imagine few prophets under whose laws it would be duller to live. Consider, for instance, the one-sided dogmatism of the following Marxist *obiter dictum*:

The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual process of life in general.

The Russians, for their sins, have been condemned to lie on the Procrustean bed of Marxian theology for more than two decades. One of the results of this experiment has been a painfully labored effort to explain the genesis of every work of art by the price of wheat, the state of export trade, and other economic data of the period when it was created. An example of this method of higher criticism was the following precious bit of absurdity, in whose existence I should scarcely have believed if I had not heard it myself at the political lecture which was formerly a regular accompaniment of Moscow concerts:

“Now, comrades, we shall hear tonight Glinka’s ‘Russland and Ludmila’ Overture and Mozart’s ‘Jupiter’ Symphony. The cheerful tone of the overture is explained by the fact that it was composed when Russian trade capitalism was expanding and Russian textiles were penetrating the markets of the Near East. You will notice some wavering in the music of Mozart. This is because the composer, during his lifetime, was always wavering between the declining aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie.”

No, socialism, absolute state dictation of economic life, whether in its complete Soviet form or in its incomplete Nazi and Fascist forms, seems to me to offer no hopeful solution of our economic and social problems. Wherever it has been introduced, it has brought servitude, both of the mind and of the body, far worse than anything known under individualist systems. A general victory of Communism or Fascism would, to me, be the end of the present cycle of civilization. In the countries that still remain free, intellectuals are under a special moral obligation to combat both these forms of demagogic tyranny, of abdication of human reason, always taking care that in opposing one form of the current attack

on liberal civilization they do not fall into the arms of the other. For among the many points which are common to the Communist and to the Fascist is a ferocious hatred of the freethinking intellectual. The capacity for critical thought must be exterminated, if these fraudulent schemes of salvation are to survive. And this process has already gone ominously far with the younger generations in the Soviet Union, Germany, and Italy.

Fortunately human happiness does not depend entirely or even mainly on political and economic systems. I often find relief from the bitterness and grief that come over me when I see the crimes and follies of man's most unsuccessful venture in collective activity, the state, in turning to the godlike creations of man the individual. For the mouthings of a Goebbels I find compensation in the magnificent odes to freedom which one can find in Goethe and Schiller. When a British publicist, commenting on a prewar flight of British airplanes over France, cheerfully suggested that here is hopeful proof that Berlin could be blown off the map I think of Shakespeare and the calm beauty of the Lake Country and the poets whom it inspired. When an Italian publicist announces, as the result of similar air maneuvers, the happy prospect of being able to sink every British ship in the Mediterranean I find consolation in the thought that a hundred years from now Dante's name will loom far larger than Mussolini's.

I should certainly not wish to nourish the illusion, so widespread in America, that there is some simple recipe for a satisfactory life, to be learned by reading a book. There is a vast variety of human tastes, and one man's pleasure may be another's purgatory—one of the many reasons why collectivist schemes to promote human welfare in mass production fashion are doomed to fail. And I can scarcely consider myself a representative American, or, indeed, a representative product of the age in which I am living. My preferences in reading, my indifference to science and invention are perhaps more appropriate to the nineteenth, even to the eighteenth, century than to the twentieth. And I rate very highly among the blessings of civilized life the sense of security which is almost completely denied to us in an epoch of wars and revolutions.

But, as an autobiography should end on a personal note, I will state briefly the qualities and the personal regime which have seemed to me to promote as much satisfaction as one can hope to enjoy in a world that grows steadily more disorderly and more dangerous.

The qualities which seem to me most conducive to happiness are steady nerves, ability to bear good fortune with moderation and bad fortune with constancy, insensitiveness to petty irritations, a sense of humor, a sense of balance and proportion, and an infinite capacity for doubting and questioning. Few things are more objectionable to me than what a friend of Philadelphia days once aptly described as "the cocksureness that is so obviously based on the most dismal ignorance." And I consider that fanaticism, however honest, is one of the most harmful and destructive of forces. Other qualities which I should add to my list of desirable traits are self-reliance, ability always to fall back on the reserves of one's inner self, ability to profit intelligently by criticism without being unduly influenced by it, ability to concentrate on every problem one's own reason and judgment, equally uninfluenced by the mob pressure of temporary majority opinion and by the gilt and tinsel of wealth and rank and reputation.

So far as the personal regime is concerned, I heartily agree with the figure (I cannot identify him at the moment) mentioned in Van Wyck Brooks's "The Flowering of New England," whose conception of the good life was always to have ten years of work ahead of him. Except for the short time which I spent in Shanghai in 1927 I have always found the days far too short for the work which I had in hand, together with indispensable reading and outdoor exercise and amusement. And, while this method of working under pressure has its disadvantages and I look forward to a more leisurely course of activity in the future, I cannot conceive of idleness as a bearable way of existence when the world offers such an infinite variety of problems to be studied and of beautiful things to be enjoyed, from Chopin ballades and Greek plays to glaciers and mountain lakes.

What sort of activity do I anticipate for the future? The catastrophe that has come over Europe has inspired in me the idea of devoting several years to studying the background and causes of the two great wars which seem to me to portend the decline and fall of European civilization. I have not finished with the Far East; I should like to undertake a historical study of the struggle for mastery among various powers in that part of the world, together with a record of the protracted Sino-Japanese War, with all its implications, military, social, and economic. The Gay-Pay-Oo has a kind of sinister fascination for me; and some day I should like

to write a history of Soviet terrorism, as completely documented as possible and provided with abundant cross references to comparative terrorist methods in Tsarist Russia and in the fascist states.

For an ultimate period of complete retirement from journalistic work I am reserving the possibility of undertaking two historical works, each of which would require many years of preparation. The first would be a history of Russian civilization up to the Revolution, a suitable point of termination, with special emphasis on the social and economic sides of Russian history and on the great cultural renaissance of the nineteenth century. After compiling the dolorous chronicle of the *Gay-Pay-Oo* it would be an immense moral and intellectual relief to turn to the personalities of Russia's great thinkers and masters of literature, Tolstoy and Herzen, Turgenev and Dostoevsky, Granovsky and Stankevitch.

The other major work which still shapes up rather dimly in my mind is a biography of my boyhood hero, the thirteenth century Hohenstaufen Emperor Frederick II. This figure of an enlightened despot, who might have been a correspondent of Voltaire, living in an era which was subjected to the unenlightened despotism of superstition, of a man struggling against his age, which broke but could not bend him, has always appealed to my imagination, even though I have found extremely little time for medieval research in recent years.

Here certainly is a program of work which might stretch over the rest of my life. But more important, to me, than the preparation of any of these books is the completion of my own education. While Haverford was probably as well suited to my tastes and needs as any American college could have been, I have always regarded my mental apprenticeship as scrappy and imperfect, partly because of my own limitations, partly because of defects in American higher education in general.

What I should like to have, what I propose to have if sufficient years are left to me, is a personal postgraduate course of study of some ten years. It would be largely devoted to assimilating and mastering, in the original languages, the classics of at least six great literatures, Greek and Latin, English and French, German and Russian. The desire for such a period of cultural development is further stimulated by the dreary prospect which opens up before our contemporary European civilization. As I look on Europe today partisanship dries up, even sympathy is overshadowed by an over-

whelming feeling of ultimate inevitable catastrophe. I sometimes feel a strong impulse to withdraw from the position of being a spectator and a commentator on this unfolding disaster, to withdraw into some humanistic equivalent for the monasteries in which people took refuge from the miseries and disorders of the declining period of the Roman Empire and the subsequent Dark Ages.

Some of my friends suggest that I should grow tired of a life of pure study and reflection. I do not believe this, for intellectual pleasures, by my experience, are the only lasting ones; and I often recall Nietzsche's saying that the acquisition of knowledge is sweeter than honey.

By what philosophy should one live? Here I offer only a personal answer to an essentially personal question. I have been most strongly influenced by two currents of thought, one Stoic, the other Epicurean. The first is that of the emperor-philosopher, Marcus Aurelius. He has come closer than any other man to formulating a pragmatic, realistic philosophy of life, free from exaggerations of optimism and pessimism, equally free from the silly overweening vanity about human powers which is cultivated in the modern dictatorships and from the unreasonably servile abasement that one sometimes finds in the writings even of such great religious thinkers as Augustine and Luther. The following quotations from Marcus Aurelius, among others, have always impressed me as unexcelled in depth of thought, in manly dignity blended with humility, in facing the vast unknowable forces of chance and life and death:

The time of a man's life is as a point; the substance of it ever flowing, the sense obscure; and the whole composition of the body tending to corruption. His soul is restless, fortune uncertain and fame doubtful; to be brief, as a stream are all things belonging to the body; as a dream or as smoke, so are all that belong unto the soul. Our life is a warfare and a mere pilgrimage. Fame after life is no better than oblivion. What is it then to which one will adhere and follow? Only one thing, philosophy. And philosophy doth consist in this, for a man to preserve that spirit which is within him, from all manner of contumelies and injuries, and above all pains and pleasures; never to do anything either rashly or feignedly or hypocritically; wholly to depend on himself and his own proper actions.

Consider the infiniteness of the time already past and the immense vastness of that which is to come, wherein all things are to be resolved

and annihilated. Art not thou then a very fool who art either puffed up with pride or distracted with cares or canst find in thy heart to make such moans as for a thing that would trouble thee for a very long time?

Let thy chief fort and place of defense be a mind free from passions. A stronger place and better fortified than this hath no man.

Along with this serious Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius, which always suggests to me the spirit of the great symphonies of Beethoven and Brahms, I esteem very highly another school of thought that also stems from ancient Greece, the mature, mellow, infinitely civilized wisdom of such modern French thinkers as Anatole France and Remy de Gourmont.

I sometimes wonder what sort of world Elizabeth will inherit from Sonya and myself. In one thing, her American citizenship, she is at least relatively fortunate. No matter what follies America's rulers and masses may commit, geography will save the country from the worst that may only too probably happen to Europe, now that the thin thread that held back the Damocles sword of war has snapped. Nothing is more foolish or more futile than for a parent to try to plan and direct a child's future.

Elizabeth's childhood has been so cosmopolitan that she could conceivably be at home in several countries besides America: in Russia and Japan, in England, France, and Germany. I hope she will never be bored by life, and will be spared the kind of misfortunes that permanently hurt and crush. As an incorrigible individualist myself I hope she will never surrender that last secure refuge of the individual, the sense of his own personality. And I commend to her a mariner's prayer of old Greece. I do not remember the exact words, but the sense is as follows:

"You may sink me or you may save me, Poseidon. But whatever you do I'll hold my course straight."

There have been few wiser and finer statements of the proper attitude of conscious man toward the immense but unconscious forces of nature and of chance by which he is surrounded.



## EPILOGUE

*It is on my forty-third birthday*, as it happens, that I am writing these last supplementary paragraphs of my autobiography. War sometimes moves at a terrific pace, upsetting the most carefully verified theories, creating situations that would have seemed fantastic if they had been predicted a few months earlier.

But, except for its naval aspects, the present war has been a curious affair of deadlock and standstill, as between the chief belligerents, Germany, France and Great Britain. So my own predictions (made with the utmost reserve, it should be understood, and only made at all because I find it impossible to live in the midst of the war without setting down my reactions to it) have not yet been tested as they will be when war enters its more desperate and destructive phases.

The sole event of outstanding importance in recent months, as it seems to me, has been the epic resistance of Finland to the Soviet invasion. I see here a new repetition of a very old historical drama, the struggle of free, individualistic Europe against the barbarous serfdom of Asia. I can imagine the spirits of Leonidas and the Three Hundred who fell at Thermopylae hovering over the Mannerheim Line. And there are surely many bonds between ancient Greeks and modern Finns, both races that combine so happily the culture of the body and of the mind. In the same way the Soviet hordes, driven into battle with machine guns, their wounded left to freeze to death, are in direct line of succession to the hosts of Xerxes.

Finland's plight should impress everyone with the faintest sense of the solidarity of European culture and civilization. For the first time since the Turks threatened Vienna in the seventeenth century,

Asia is invading Europe. Genghis Khan is on the march. And there seems little prospect that Europe will awake to the danger, settle its own suicidal war, and present a united front to the advance of the slow, clumsy, but terribly heavy glacial mass from the East.

I read over with special care the chapter in which I discussed the prospects which open up before Europe as a result of the war. Had I been too pessimistic? I wish I could believe this. But, while it would be the most foolish presumption to pose as a prophet of the course of a war that will almost certainly contain an abundance of surprises and unexpected turns, there are a few basic unmistakable facts in the situation which must be reckoned with.

I do not believe that Germany can conquer England and France. But I am almost equally skeptical as to the ability of England and France to crush Germany. After all it took six great powers (Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Japan, and the United States) to break down the German resistance in 1918. Even when one makes proper allowance for certain inferiorities of the Nazi fighting machine and social and economic organism to those of prewar Germany, it seems doubtful whether two powers will be able to achieve what it took the efforts of six (not, of course, all pulling the same weight and at the same time) to accomplish twenty-two years ago.

And victory over Germany will be hollow indeed, if it is purchased at the price of such sacrifice and destruction as will lead to social upheavals in the victorious countries and perhaps end in an epidemic of furious and senseless social and class war all over the Continent. It is dangerous to be a prophet, even in a negative sense. But somehow the idea of an Anglo-French condominium over the whole land mass from the Rhine to the Pacific does not seem feasible to me.

The outlook would rather seem to be for a very long deadlock, the war gradually assuming a more bitter and destructive character, but without leading to a decisive result. The financial, psychological, and social strains and stresses of the struggle will become more intense, with the result that what started as a national war may well end with many aspects of a social civil war. No matter how many ingenious paper schemes may be drawn up by benevolent amateurs in international relations, the ideal of peace and stability in Europe, I fear, will prove an ever receding mirage.

Some friends to whom I have shown the manuscript believe that I may have overstressed the danger of American participation in

the war. I hope they are right, just as I hope that my own darker fears about the gradual dissolution of European culture and civilization will be disproved by some unforeseen happy turn of events. But I am inclined to believe that anyone who believes that America's political mission should be primarily restricted to the American continent will not waste his words if he states his case as forcibly as possible.

The war in Western Europe has been of a singularly unexciting character—so far. The emotional tests of the policy of noninvolvement have not yet been met. I believe there is a much better case, morally and intellectually, for consistent American nonparticipation in European and Asiatic wars than is recognized by many who seem to have learned and forgotten little since 1917.

PARIS, February 17, 1940.

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