



# Stalin means War

*the memoirs of*  
COLONEL G. A. TOKAEV

Formerly Chief of the Aerodynamics  
Laboratory of the Moscow Military  
Air Academy, Regular Officer of the  
Soviet Army.



STALIN MEANS WAR





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## ERRATA

- Page vii      *read* : holder of the Red Banner and Order of Lenin, former  
line 19-21      lecturer at the Military Air Academy in Moscow.
- Page 153      *For Tank read* Schlange  
line 1
- Page 205      *read* : . . . as a genuine son of the people, I felt that I could  
line 35      do more for my country abroad than I could ever  
succeed in doing within its borders.

## PREFACE

**I** LIVED and worked, for several years, in close contact with the highest representatives of the Soviet Communist Party, the Soviet youth movement, the trade unions, and the military oligarchy of the U.S.S.R. I penetrated the inner sanctum of the Politburo, and had frequent meetings with Stalin himself. On many occasions, I heard from Stalin's own lips, and those of his closest collaborators, direct and frank pronouncements, in unofficial as well as official surroundings, on internal and world affairs.

I am deeply convinced that such utterances are worthy of presentation to the democratic world, and that they should be considered with urgent seriousness, as directly affecting the freedom of humanity. Naturally it is not pleasant to disclose the secrets of the government of one's own country, but, when the peace, the freedom and the happiness of the world's peoples are at stake, I have no hesitation in taking this task upon myself.

I am a regular officer of the Soviet Army, with the rank of Engineer Lieutenant Colonel; former lecturer of the Red Banner and Order of Lenin Military Air Academy in Moscow; acting professor of the Moscow Institute of Engineers of Geodesy and Aerophotography, with the diploma of Engineer Mechanic; sub-professor (reader) of construction, soundness, design and aerodynamics of aircraft; Candidate of Technical Science. From June, 1945, until the time of my escape to the West, I was an officer of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany, employed as an expert on questions of aviation, rocket and reactive technology and science.

I should have liked to confine revelations about myself to these few lines. The publication of this book will not gratify any selfish aims; I seek neither financial gain nor personal fame. Above all, I am anxious to avoid sensationalism. My only object is to tell the world the truth. But as I stand before public opinion as a witness upon matters of vital importance, it is inevitable that I must



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submit certain personal credentials, on the basis of which some opinion can be formed as to what sort of person I am, what my character is and whether I am deserving of confidence. Writing as a witness, I have to outline my antecedents, to illustrate briefly the birth and gradual ripening of my decision to escape from Soviet rule, and to devote all my powers to the task of acquainting the free peoples of the West with the plans being forged against them in the Kremlin, and with the feverish preparatory work to fulfil them.

The criticisms of Stalin and his regime which I express in this book are actuated by no vestige of personal bitterness or anger, though both might well have resulted from many of my experiences, starting with my Komsomol (Communist Youth Union) days and continuing through my membership of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. The scars of the violent beating-up I received from the NKVD will remain with me all my life. Yet I no longer feel personal anger at this treatment. I am even inclined to feel considerable gratitude to the Soviet regime. During the first half of its existence, at least, it retained quite a lot of the good features promised by Lenin. My own particular cause for gratitude lay in the abolition of all obstacles to the acquisition of knowledge. I feel by no means certain that, in Tsarist days, my three brothers, my sister and I, children of a peasant small-holder family of a minority nation, would have found it possible to receive higher education and, by means of it, to rise comparatively high on the social ladder. But under the Soviet regime, all five of us succeeded in doing this, without any extraordinary effort. This fact inspired whatever gratitude I felt to the existing regime.

It should be added that I belonged to that particular stratum of Soviet society which lived not only tolerably well, from the material point of view, but very well indeed in comparison with the bulk of the populace. Stalin's regime became intolerable to me solely because it was founded on the suppression of all human rights of freedom, on coercion and falsity.

*G.A.T.  
London, 1950.*

# PART I

## *SOVIET PEACE AND SOVIET WAR*

### CHAPTER I

#### My first twenty years

I WAS born on October 13th, 1909, in the Northern Caucasus. My father was a North Osetian peasant small-holder in the Vladikavkaz Province; a simple, honest, hard-working man, devoted to his wife and family. I was the fourth son and we had one sister. Though not rich, we lived in sufficient comfort, a united family, whose whole spirit could be summarised in a few favourite maxims of my father: "Be honest and just towards your friends and your enemies; never trade your conscience; value freedom above all, and never sacrifice it."

When the first world war broke out I was five years old; when Russia became the arena of the world's greatest social upheaval, with the Bolshevik Party seizing power under Lenin's leadership, I had just reached the age of eight. At the time of the final extermination of all armed resistance to Soviet power by the White Guard, led by Generals Denikin and Wrangel, and the end of the civil war, I was twelve.

I spent all my childhood years in my native land, and only in 1928, at the age of nineteen, was I directed by the Provincial Council of Trade Unions to the Workers' Faculty of the Leningrad Mining Academy, and there entered the first stage of my systematic secondary education, for which I received a State grant.

Thus the whole of my spiritually conscious life was conditioned by Soviet rule at a period when Tsarist Russia already belonged to the dim and distant past, lost, with hardly a trace, in the shadows of the forgotten. Soviet power was stably and soundly established.

My father had died in 1918, and the whole burden of a

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young family, without one breadwinner, had then fallen upon the shoulders of my mother. Her indomitable courage and devotion will ever remain as my most inspiring memory.

In consequence of the first world conflagration, the chaos of revolution and civil war, and the dreadful famine which swept Northern Caucasus in 1921, there was no chance of a primary education for me. I learned to read and write as part of our family life, and my chief childish enthusiasm lay in reading my father's favourite poet—the famous Osetian democrat, Kosta Khetagurov—who embodied for me then, as now, the essence of our passionate love of the freedom-loving democratic spirit.

The entire environment of my early youth, inspired by my family's reactions to pre-revolutionary injustices and infringements of human rights, created fertile soil for my development into an enthusiastic and active supporter of the Soviet system of government. Throughout the period of the revolution and the civil war of 1918-21, the sympathies of my father and my elder brothers were those of confirmed Marxist-Leninists who wholeheartedly supported the Soviet power, because it promised—or seemed to promise—the very essence of freedom. This was natural enough, for the innate yearning of the North Caucasian people in general, and of the North Osetian people in particular, for liberty and democracy had not weakened in fifty years of subjugation to Tsarist Russia.

I give these details in order to emphasise the fact that our family was completely Soviet and “revolutionary.” There can be no question of our ever having been swayed by “White Guard” or bourgeois imperialist trends. We were children of working people; we grew up under the banner of Soviet power. We all “rose in the world” beneath Soviet rule, by means of our own determined and conscientious efforts to turn ourselves into educated people.

In 1924, the Soviet Government bought a consignment of American “Fordson” tractors for distribution among voluntary peasant co-operatives for combined cultivation of the land. One of these tractors was allotted to the village in which I lived. It interested me so greatly that I could hardly tear myself away from it. In answer to my persistent requests, the mechanic agreed to accept me as an

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unpaid "pupil mate." I soon learned all there was to know about the machine, and soon afterwards began to work as an independent tractor driver-mechanic, and so earned my living.

After five uninterrupted years at this job, I reached the conclusion that I must study, until I could become a fully-fledged tractor engineer. Thereafter, when my day's work was done, I devoted myself to deep study until far into the night. In 1928, I was transferred to a motor-tractor repair shop, and simultaneously took the preparatory course at the Vladikavkaz Workers' Faculty. Despite all this additional labour, I somehow found time to take an active part in the work of the provincial newspaper, "Rastdainad," and the Komsomol organisation of which I had become a member in 1925.

During my years in the ranks of the Komsomol, I had met with serious difficulties because I lacked the quality of blind fanaticism. In 1927, I was expelled from the Komsomol for too zealous defence of my rights. When, for instance, I demanded the payment of wages due to me as a tractor driver, which I had not received for a considerable period, I was at once accused of sabotage and Trotskyism.

After a short period, my expulsion was rescinded and I was reinstated in the Komsomol with a "reprimand." This experience left dregs of bitterness in my heart, for I was deeply convinced that I had deserved neither the reprimand nor the moral chastisement. It did not, however, lead me to attribute the injustice I had suffered to any perversion in the Soviet power itself. I was then far too young and ignorant. I ascribed the guilt for my punishment, not to the Soviet hegemony, but entirely to its unworthy representatives. My faith in Soviet integrity was still unimpaired.

Following my reinstatement, I became more active than before as a Komsomol worker, and was soon elected a member of the Bureau of the Komsomol Collective.

Early in 1928, I was honoured by a special *gramota* (commendation) from the Provincial Council of Trade Unions for distinction in productive work. In the summer of 1929, as a reward for many years of exemplary productive and social-political work, the same Trade Union Council arranged a stipend for me and sent me to Leningrad, where

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I became a student of the Workers' Faculty of the Mining Academy. True, my great wish to become an engineer directly concerned with tractor construction had not even been considered, but I accepted the fact with resignation.

In Leningrad, the first doubts began to creep into my heart regarding the direction in which Stalin was leading the country. He followed the line of centralisation in every sphere of life in the gigantic empire. In the economic field, particular attention was concentrated on heavy industry, and, in the agricultural sphere, on the compulsory rounding-up of peasants in collective farms (Kolkhos). The preparation of the country for external military-political adventures became the prime objective. Russia must move "towards world revolution, towards the strengthening of the U.S.S.R. military power as a base of world revolution," said Stalin.

Realisation of such plans demanded a powerful army and fleet, with tanks, aircraft, artillery, transport, munitions, and other war panoply: it was therefore essential to create a mighty heavy industry. Where could Stalin get the money to subsidise his vast projects? The answer was near at hand. The vast mass of the peasantry had succeeded, since 1921, in reinforcing its damaged economy and had even achieved a certain degree of prosperity. Clearly, this represented a source from which suitable pressure could squeeze the resources required. Soviet propaganda went into action, and loudly proclaimed the absolute necessity of "overtaking and surpassing the capitalist countries." The true and only purpose behind the new drive was to intensify military production, and, on the basis of a tremendous armament industry, to export revolution by means of the bayonets, tanks and aeroplanes of the Red Army.

From the outset, the peasants met Stalin's plan with fierce resistance. So a valid excuse had to be discovered for crushing their "reaction." This excuse was swiftly found in the phrase, "Liquidation of the Kulaks as a class."

All peasants who were more or less comfortably off were labelled as "Kulaks"; all who employed hired labour, even during the short peaks of seasonal work; shopkeepers; religious workers; former "White" officers; one-time



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members of the Tsarist police and gendarmerie; past Cossack Atamans (chieftains of Cossack villages); private owners of corn-mills, butter churns, threshers, sowers or steam engines; almost any family guilty of the crimes of eating and dressing decently and living in tasteful surroundings. And there were many more. Those who refused to become "collectivised" automatically gave the authorities cause to proclaim them Kulaks, and this, in its turn, provided a means of extending the black list.

At dead of night, the special groups of activists would set out to execute their part of the operation. Armed with pistols and other weapons, they forced their way into the dwellings of the newly pronounced Kulaks. The group leaders passed sentence on each of the wretched peasants concerned, in similar terms: "According to the decision of the Soviet power, you are a Kulak and are liable to corrective treatment. From this moment, you and your family are under arrest, and your house and property pass into the ownership of the collective farm. Put on your clothes and get out!"

Words cannot describe the effect of this sudden judgment. Whole families were thrown into the street. Their belongings were either marked down as confiscated property or, there and then, loaded into the family cart and despatched to a general collecting base, where they were added to a rapidly-mounting pile of plundered goods. Cattle and poultry were rounded up on the spot. The arrested families were taken under armed guard to transit points, from whence they were rapidly exiled to Siberia, Central Asia or other remote areas.

Later, I learned that, in certain districts, the lists of "Kulaks" were compiled somewhat less arbitrarily, and were even subjected to confirmation by higher authorities, in order to give some semblance of legality to the process of pillage. This slight variation in procedure, however, made no discernible difference to the results achieved.

It was not very long before the category of Kulaks was widened to embrace the poor, as well as the bourgeoisie. Take the case of the Varsiev.

I knew this family well. Though peasants, they were educated, intelligent people—an aged father, an elderly mother, a daughter and four sons, of whom one was an

invalid, unfit for work. They owned two horses and the same proportion of land per head as every other family in the village. When it was suggested to them that they should join the collective farm, one of the sons replied, politely enough, that he would like to consider the proposition and, if he reached the conclusion that the collective farm offered all the advantages alleged, he would gladly join it. This perfectly reasonable reply sufficed to condemn the entire family as "Kulaks." The three brothers who could work were exiled; the remaining members were first thrown into the street and then hounded out of the village. All their belongings and property were confiscated.

Or consider the example of the family of the peasant, Galin, in Akhtuba. Without warning, their home is overrun by a crowd of ruffians. The leader of the gang proclaims: "You are under arrest as Kulaks." The father attempts to resist . . . a shot . . . he falls dead. Men, weeping women and children, sick people, are flung from the house by armed guards. They are given no time to dress themselves. Their few possessions are thrown out into the yard, then carted off to the storehouse of Kulak belongings. A close relation of the family—a member of the Communist Party—weeps like a child . . . . Next day, he buries his murdered kinsman. For this he is instantly expelled from the Party as a supporter of the Kulaks though, in point of fact, he happens to be a pauper. At length, he is exiled, with many others, somewhere east "to build Socialism."

Terrified people, hidden behind the doors of their homes, peeped through spy-holes, waiting in dread for the moment when the waves of Stalin's latest typhoon would sweep them to destruction. It was forbidden—and, in any event, impossible—to leave the village. Small wonder that, at length, a time came when most peasants were willing to agree to anything to placate the authorities, merely to escape from the terror.

From the farms of the newly-enlisted collectivists, equipment and cattle were speedily transferred to collective farm holdings. Mothers and children wept as their cows, their chief means of sustaining life, were driven away.

Yet, among those peasants who were not immediately included on the list of Kulaks, a hard core of determined

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objectors persisted in their refusal to join the collective farms, despite the terror. Every form of pressure was applied to them—threats, slander, constraint. Hooligans loitered outside their homes, taunting them. Postmen were instructed not to deliver mail to such "individualists"; at the District Medical Centre, they were told that only collective farmers and their families could be accepted as patients. Often, their children were expelled from school, and dismissed shamefully from the Detachment of Young Pioneers and the Komsomol. The corn-mills refused to grind their grain; the blacksmiths would do no work for them. The stigma of "individualists," as applied by the authorities, was akin to classing a man as a criminal. Peasants thus officially labelled began to feel ashamed to mix with their kind. So the ugly process of baiting continued in increasing measure.

The rebellious core of peasants came to realise, bitterly, that it was humanly impossible to remain outside the collective farms. Once more, they started slaughtering their own cattle. "Better eat it ourselves than let it be 'collectivised,'" they told each other. So, from 1929 to 1931, recalcitrant peasants slaughtered and devoured chickens, ducks, geese, sheep, goats, cows and bulls, in quantities they had never consumed before, and would probably never again enjoy in their lives. "There is nothing bad without some good in it," commented ex-People's Commissar of Agriculture, Chernov. "For the first time in their sordid history, Russian peasants have eaten their fill of meat."

Meanwhile, the nationalised collective farm animals, carelessly herded, deprived of the attention they had received from their private masters, went hungry, sickened and perished. In 1931, I accompanied the Secretary of the Provincial Committee of the Komsomol on a visit to various newly-created farms. At each, from two to seven horses died nightly. At the collective farms of the Zmeiskoi, Ehkhotoovo, Iran and Stavd-Dorta, there was hardly a single horse that was fit for work. Yet these particular districts had always been renowned for their splendid stud-farms.

In 1933 I returned to the Northern Caucasus on a visit

from Moscow, and went to see a collective farm for myself. I had a talk with the local Party Secretary, who admitted that, in the normal way, not more than 30 per cent of the able-bodied peasants turned up to work, and that even this proportion worked in a "state-servant spirit," without enthusiasm, "just to pass the time."

In the morning I watched the rounding-up of the workers. The brigadier went from house to house; the doors remained obstinately closed; there was no response to his knocks. "Eh, you there, the devil take you, come out to work!" bawled the brigadier. Eventually, a collective farmer would appear, and complain, "I am sick. I cannot come out to work."

"Where is your doctor's certificate?"

"And where would I find a doctor? The village doesn't possess one."

"If you have no certificate, out to work with you!"

This futile argument continued for some fifteen minutes. The brigadier went on to the next house: the scene repeated itself. Finally, a limited number of workers gathered at the main office of the collective farm—without any farming tools. A search was made for trowels, but only a very few could be found. Then the question of transport arose—how were the peasants to get to the fields? Everybody grumbled. So it went on until the dinner hour.

The assembled peasants declared that they would not go hungry to work. The Party Organiser, the Komsomol Organiser, the President of the Collective Farm and the President of the Village Council were sent for. With shouts, threats and curses, the peasants were ordered to work, with the promise that a meal would be supplied to them in the fields.

In the fields, however, were no cooking utensils, no water, no provisions. The brigadier bustled back to headquarters to organise some food. Meanwhile, no work was done.

Later, I watched these people at work. Listlessly, lazily, and with complete inefficiency, the peasants performed a number of scheduled movements. It was not work, but a mockery.

"Why do you work so unwillingly?" I asked one of them.

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"Why should I work?" he retorted. "I didn't ask anyone to make me a collective farmer." And another of the peasants added, "Those who made the collective farms should work in them."

I have instanced the state of affairs in a single district, but, generally speaking, the situation was just as bad everywhere else.

No measure inflicted by the Soviet oligarchy up to that time aroused in me such intense indignation as the "liquidation of the Kulaks as a class," with all the inhuman brutality which surrounded it. When, in November, 1929, Soviet newspapers printed Stalin's article, "The Year of the Great Transition," and I read his statement that peasants were voluntarily joining the collective farms, "not merely in groups, but in whole villages, volosts, districts and even regions," I could only assume that he had been wildly misinformed concerning the realities of the situation. True, I was already a prey to considerable doubts of Stalin's reputed omniscience, particularly as evinced in his agrarian policy, but I was still incapable of facing the possibility that the absolute ruler of one-sixth of the world could indulge in open lies.

Hence, I reached the conclusion (one shared, I may say, by a large number of honest and loyal Party members) that Stalin and his Political Bureau had been kept in entire ignorance, or else deliberately deceived, regarding the outrageous facts of this "voluntary" collectivisation. Responsibility for the means employed, I reasoned, must therefore rest with the local authorities, inspired, perhaps, by District representatives of the Party.

With these ideas in my mind, I returned to Moscow from the Northern Caucasus in February, 1931, and at once wrote a twelve-page letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In this, by means of profuse and factual evidence, I drew attention to the flagrant transgression of Lenin's principles which permeated the current methods of collectivisation, and endeavoured to spur the Agricultural Department into urgent intervention.

Needless to say, my letter—like hundreds of similar communications from orthodox supporters of Soviet rule—produced no results. I was to discover later that no result could have been expected, because all outrages embraced



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by collectivisation were perpetrated in accordance with the deliberate plans of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, and of Stalin himself.

There can be no shadow of doubt that Stalin was fully informed on every aspect of the campaign, a fact which did not prevent him from placing the whole blame for its brutal administration upon the shoulders of low-ranking subordinates. His sensational article, *Giddiness from Success* (April, 1930), which contained direct rebukes to the "over-enthusiastic head-choppers," was an excuse of unexampled hypocrisy.

There is no need to enlarge any further upon the catastrophic consequences of Stalin's "liquidation of the Kulaks as a class." It is enough to say that no more than one-third (some say one-fifth) of the total livestock recorded in 1928 were to be counted in the U.S.S.R. at the completion of this ruinous experiment. The reader can judge the effect of this progressive decline on meat, butter and milk supplies to urban districts.

I witnessed the full consequence of this policy when I returned to the Northern Caucasus in 1933. The memory torments me, after sixteen years. I was appalled by the depths of misery to which my people had been driven. I had known this land when it was all prosperity, bounteous with food for everyone, alive with gaiety. Now I found the countryside reduced to utter desolation and misery. Fences, hedges and gates had all vanished for fuel. Streets were overgrown with weed and bracken, houses were falling to pieces. The people, dressed in pauper's rags, many of them more like skeletons than living men and women, had sick and sombre faces. Life and laughter had gone with the Soviet wind. Even the once-enthusiastic Party activists had lost faith in life and the future.

The Northern Caucasians smoked grass instead of tobacco, for every tobacco plant was numbered by the Government, every leaf counted. Even the water melons were numbered, and nobody had the right to take one to eat. This, in the Caucasus where melons once had grown in wild profusion!

## CHAPTER II

### In trouble with the Party

**B**Y this time, I was thoroughly acquainted with the theoretical background of Marxism, Leninism, Stalinism and Socialism. And the ugly events of 1928-33 compelled me to contrast the basic promises made by Lenin and Stalin and the appalling realities I had witnessed. I came to the conclusion that our country was rushing towards the abyss; that the regime of single-party dictatorship created by Lenin had degenerated into a counter-revolutionary despotism, inspired by Stalin himself. With no conscious effort of will, I suddenly became convinced that I must join those who sought to open the eyes of their compatriots to the realities of Stalin's subversive policy. It seemed to me, at that time, that the imperative duty of every genuine Socialist was to attempt to restore the country to the revolutionary course outlined by Lenin in his last articles. Such was the road which led me to "partial opposition" as an anti-Stalinist.

It was in 1931 that personal experience convinced me that the dictatorial clique responsible for the country's direction had irrevocably declined into an inhuman machine, powered by coercion. Complete abnegation of independent thought or criticism was demanded from all. Only blind, unquestioning obedience to the dictates of the counter-revolutionary Kremlin was tolerated. Already an active Komsomol worker, with directive powers, I became, that year, a candidate Party member, and, in February, 1932, a registered member of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (VEP/b). At that time, I was studying at the Workers' Faculty of the Moscow Higher Technical School, to which I had been transferred from Leningrad in the spring of 1930.

Why did I enter the ranks of the Communist Party when my mind was possessed by such serious doubts of Stalin's honesty? To me, at least, the answer is clear enough.

The essential point was that I still considered there was some hope for the Party. There seemed to be no concrete

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evidence that its deviation from true revolutionary policy was final and irremediable. Between 1930 and 1932, there were intermittent but definite gleams of promise that the era of ruthless dictatorship would soon be outlived, and that the country would yet emerge into the light of a reasonably achieved and conducted Socialism. I was deeply convinced at that period that the Party's current policy could be attributed only to the depravity of people like Stalin, Molotov and Kirov, and assuredly not to the revolutionary essence of Soviet power. Accordingly, my friends and I concluded that we should not boycott the Party, but that, on the contrary, our principal aim should be to ensure that the organisation included the greatest possible number of "moderates."

My opinions were mainly moulded by direct personal experience of the regime's tactics towards individuals. Particularly significant was the occasion when my simple refusal to follow a path of blind fanaticism resulted in my being expelled from the Party and dismissed from my executive post in the Komsomol. The full story is too long, and involves too many details to be told here. I will only say that, finally, the District Party Control Commission of the Buman District of Moscow forced me to swallow my own bitter feelings and go through the process of publicly confessing to a catalogue of "sins" I had not committed, while acknowledging the "justice" of the punishment I had received. Only then was I reinstated in the Party—with a black entry, in my personal record, of a severe reprimand.

Oddly enough, that reprimand proved of great service to me. Shortly before completing my course at the Higher Technical School, I had been selected as a candidate for the Special School of the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs—in short, the Secret Police). I could not have imagined a more frightful prospect. But, when the directors learned that I had recently been the recipient of a severe reprimand, they decided that I fell short of being "thoroughly reliable," and my candidature was erased. Lucky, indeed, was my escape from the highly-prized "honour" of joining that blood-drenched department.

Upon leaving the Workers' Faculty in May, 1932, I entered the famous Military-Air Academy named after Pro-

fessor Zhukovski, in Moscow. A secret denunciation by one of my friends—such shameful practices had by then become daily occurrences—almost succeeded in closing its doors in my face; fortunately, however, things straightened themselves out, and I entered the Academy's Engineering Faculty, becoming an officer of Soviet Aviation.

There, within a very few weeks, another "incident" occurred, which entailed my being expelled from the Party again! The trouble, this time, lay in my objection to certain unprintable phrases addressed to me by the Political Commissar of my section—a man marked equally by a superfluity of coarseness and absence of culture. I was, as yet, unaccustomed to the quite incredible grossness of language and conduct which distinguished (and still distinguishes) the Red Army. I did not know that this habitual obscenity was considered "good form," even in so exclusive a training establishment as the Zhukovski Academy. My protest, however, was taken in the worst possible light as a betrayal of my "spirit of citizenship," and an indication that I was tainted with leanings towards the Right.

The baseness of the methods used in investigating my "crime" would have revolted any person of normal mentality. The hammering, insistent phrases—"Admit your error"—"The Party demands an admission of your error"—... threats, blackmail and final, enforced submission. Again I was reinstated in the Party, with a second severe reprimand registered in my personal record. Some trumped-up misdemeanour, having no connection with my real "crime" was entered as the reason for my punishment on this occasion.

The situation could not have been summed up better than it was by the Commissar of the Academy—Indrikson—a man of the old school, of honest and idealistic principles, even then a waning type in the Soviet Army. In answer to my complaint at the injustice of the verdict, he said simply, "You were born at the wrong time, Comrade Tokaev. You are not attuned to modern conditions. You are too frank, too straight-forward. Because of that, you will find life difficult. . . ."

It was all unpleasant enough, but, as my real friends in the U.S.S.R. could always testify, I never adopted an atti-

tude of personal spite against the authorities. I harboured no grudges. Whatever they did, to me or anyone else, I always sought first an answer to my over-riding questions on the real substance of the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat.

Even more gruesome and far-reaching were the consequences of the great Party purge of 1933. At public meetings, members of the Party were called in turn to the "judgment seat" and compelled to turn their very souls inside out. Each member of the assembly was permitted to inquire into every detail of the personal life of the Comrade under examination; to root into his past history and that of his parents, ancestors and most distant relations. The more insulting and baseless the insinuations made against the victims of this moral lynching, the better the authorities were pleased. Many a cheap-jack informer laid the foundation of a promising career in the Party by his sensational and entirely irresponsible testimony at one of these tribunals, which offered immeasurable opportunities for squaring domestic accounts, and which were actuated by little more than a spirit of venegance and spite.

Careful steps, taken well in advance, enabled me to pass through the purgatory of the examination with comparatively minor scratches, but I witnessed the lives of many honest men being shattered for ever.

Following the purge, a bullet fired at close range from a revolver in Leningrad killed Stalin's closest friend and comrade-at-arms, his satrap and protégé, the all-powerful Party boss, Sergei Mironovich Kirov (Kostrikov). This assassination, which occurred on December 1st, 1934, was followed by a reign of terror. People were arrested everywhere, without discrimination and without formalities; fantastic denunciations sufficed to seal any innocent citizen's doom. How many people were shot in GPU cellars and other dark corners during the years of Stalin's panic-stricken reaction to Kirov's murder will never be known with any precision: that there were hecatombs none of us present could doubt—people "disappeared" on every hand. In Leningrad alone, 25,000 to 30,000 people were known to have died by violence, and this grim total did not cover the hordes who were imprisoned or exiled to camps.



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Everyone took whatever precautions occurred to him. Personally, I went systematically through all documents and letters in my possession, destroying any, however innocuous, which could conceivably have appeared suspicious or compromising to the inflamed eyes of the NKVD. I was particularly careful to obliterate any traces of meetings or even casual contact with people whose attitude towards Stalin and his current policy might be regarded as disloyal or "oppositionist." No less carefully did I avoid meeting such people, particularly at home or in any other non-public places. My friends pursued a similar course regarding myself—experience of past years stood us in good stead. Thanks partly to these precautionary measures and partly to simple good fortune, the raging torrent of terror which disfigured the first month of Stalin's "reaction" did not sweep me up.

My respite from the terror, gratifying as it seemed, proved to be short-lived. A few weeks later, I made the mistake of telling a funny story to certain friends of mine at the Faculty. The characters in the anecdote were Stalin, Kirov and Voroshilov, and I recounted it solely as a warning example of how even apparently innocent jests might contain the germ of "oppositionism" and, in fact, have been circulated with the object of undermining Soviet rule. I considered my colleagues present to be my nearest and dearest friends—reliable to a man. Within a quarter of an hour of my telling the story, Georgi Kiselev, whom I regarded as one of my bosom companions, had handed a written denunciation of my behaviour to the Party Organiser and the Commissar of the Faculty.

This sufficed to bring into motion a whole array of Party-Commissar meetings to investigate the question of Tokaev's "hostile sortie." The previous inquisitions I had undergone were child's play to what I faced now. A large number of my fellow-students, whom I had till then supposed to be my good and trusted friends, fell upon me at gatherings called to discuss my enmity to the Soviet regime and the Communist leaders. Every student was spurred by the fear that, if he failed to play his full part in baiting me, he himself would fall under the suspicion of sympa-

thising with an "enemy of the people." I understood it all.

My Party card was taken away on the spot. The verdict of instant expulsion was confirmed by every higher tribunal which concerned itself with my case, and, before each and every one, I had once again to endure the self-same process of moral lynching. From the moment the Party disowned me I became an outcast and leper from whom all friends and acquaintances turned aside. Only one true comrade was sufficiently intrepid to meet me in secret and give me his moral support. I can never think of this noble friend without feelings of deepest gratitude and affection.

My expulsion from the Party did not mark the end of my troubles. On the day I told that wretched funny story, the NKVD section in our Academy developed a sudden interest in me; after a very short time, I was taken into custody. Later, I learned that the formal excuse for my arrest was provided by some woman, entirely unknown to me, who had heard somehow of my expulsion and remarked, in a strident voice: "Have you heard? Another one has been expelled. It is somebody called Tokaev. They say he wanted to murder Stalin and Voroshilov. They say he leads a whole terrorist group which has penetrated the Kremlin!" Who reported this conversation to the NKVD, I have no idea; I only know that it brought about the good woman's arrest, and also my own.

At my first interrogation, on the evening following my arrest, I refused point-blank to answer any questions, as a protest against the injustice of the proceedings. The woman's raving allegations were repeated two or three times. I said not a word. At length my wrists were handcuffed behind my back. Then, as they could still get no reply from me, I was hurled into a very small dark room.

Two days later, my interrogation was renewed. And now the situation became more serious. A different Chekist cross-examined me, and, after some time, handed me a prepared statement, which recounted the whole history of my ill-fated anecdote about Stalin and Voroshilov, together with all relevant facts which concerned it. Certainly, this protocol, except for unimportant details, had been compiled

correctly enough. Nevertheless, I refused categorically to put my signature to it, insisting that I would sign no document which had not been written by myself, in my own hand, on my own paper. My obstinacy reduced the Chekist to uttering a flow of invective; whereupon I protested against his language. When I tried to get up, he threw me back into the chair. Since, from early childhood, I had never been able to tolerate physical force, I pushed his hands away, quite instinctively. He replied with a full swing from his fist at my face, which made my nose bleed. Quite furious, I leapt at him and gave him a blow which he doubtless remembered for a very long time. I was a trained athlete, with a boxer's build and considerable strength.

I had, however, to pay for the delight this action gave me. A second Chekist rushed into the room. A revolver butt crashed on to the back of my head, then full in my face, just missing my left eye. With a groan I lost consciousness; for how long, I still do not know—I suppose for an hour or two. When I regained my senses, I felt a terrible pain in my head. I then discovered that my hands were pinioned behind my back; the flesh of my right wrist was pinched in the clamp of the handcuffs. I was lying on the stone floor of a cell. It occurred to me that I must be in the cellars of the Academy, so I got to my feet, despite the pain, groped my way to the door and banged on it with my boot. I hoped that one of my former "friends" would hear the noise, and at least have the decency to release me. In due course, somebody opened the door and at once gave me a hard kick in the stomach. I fell headlong. The door was slammed: I remained on the floor until the following evening. Nobody brought me any water or food.

When, at last, the door was reopened, I did not even notice the fact. But somebody helped me to my feet and removed the accursed handcuffs. His rough handling added to my pain, but I no longer cared about pain. I was frozen stiff; my legs felt like solid ice. By degrees my "liberator" succeeded in leading me out into the yard. He even gave me a cigarette and said a few friendly words, half-humorously reproaching me for my obstinacy.

It was not the yard of the Academy; the noise of the nearby railway engine indicated that I must be some con-

siderable distance away from that institution. I was faint with weakness and anxiety. My "liberator" urged me towards a car, saying that he was going to drive me home. I became convinced that he was taking me to be shot or exiled. Hardly realising what I was doing, I determined to resist until my last breath. He gave me a push towards the car; I retorted by trying to kick him. Unfortunately, I was so weak that the effort caused me to fall against him. This led to another beating-up, more violent than the previous one. Rather more than half-dead, I was at length pushed back into that icy dog-kennel of a cell. But this time, I was not handcuffed—a fact for which I was duly grateful. I have little idea of what happened after that. I think that, the following morning, somebody brought me some food, but I was far beyond eating or even desiring to eat. Then the doctor came to see me and ordered my immediate removal to the isolation ward in the polyclinic. There they bandaged me and gave me many varieties of medicine, but nothing helped. Though my injuries were patched up in due course, and receded, at least, to a secondary stage of seriousness, they were succeeded by a desperate illness, caused by inflammation of the mucous membranes of the nose and throat, coupled with blood poisoning, due to prolonged exposure in my cell in the January cold. For a long time I could swallow nothing, and had to be fed artificially.

I was certainly in pretty bad shape when I reached the hospital. I lay in some sort of dirty passage, and was given a blood transfusion there and then. The doctor in charge told me later that I was regarded merely as a test case, owing to the swift and nearly always fatal course of the disease. He was personally convinced that there was no hope whatever of my recovering: accordingly, he treated me as something of a guinea pig for experimental treatment. In a couple of weeks, despite everything, my young and vigorous constitution began to gain the upper hand, and I turned the corner. But, by then, my boxer's physique was reduced to a skeleton, sparsely clothed in flesh and bandages.

I need hardly mention that none of my friends came near me while I hovered at death's door. Nobody dared to visit me, although everyone in the Faculty was fully aware

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where I was, and knew of my condition. Who, after all, would openly risk being suspected of fraternising with an "enemy of the people"? Who in his senses would wish to visit an isolation ward for infectious diseases? My relatives were turned from the door with falsehoods, or threats, or both.

As soon as I left hospital, I was once again ordered to visit the NKVD Section of the Academy. I found entirely new faces there. Even the chief of the Department had been uncovered as an "enemy of the people"—certainly no man more thoroughly merited the label—and shot out of hand. This was a normal occurrence in these sombre times.

After prolonged efforts, I was successful in arranging for my case to be reconsidered. In course of time, I was reinstated in the Party—but with another severe reprimand and a final warning. Once again I took up active Party work, played my part in the production of a newspaper called *Ahead and Higher*, directed a circle for the study of Marxism-Leninism, read lectures, and delivered speeches to workers.

Despite the aversion I felt towards the Kremlin's counter-revolutionaries, I did not, in 1936-37, take part in any oppositionist moves. I had learned by harsh experience, and fulfilled all the duties assigned to me by the Party without a murmur, never exploiting the excellent chances confronting me for decisive propaganda against the regime. Our Party organisation hardly held a meeting at which I did not make a speech. But that was compulsory. I frankly admit that, on occasion, I took myself to task for my own convictions. "Perhaps," I reasoned, "after all, things are not quite so bad as they seem. Maybe, Russia is not yet ready for democratic life. Possibly the Central Committee has some over-riding State considerations which made terrorism essential." Then I would dive, once again, into the study of Russia's political history. Such doubts continued to harass me at least until the trial of the BURYTO group (Bukharin-Rykov-Tomski), the shooting of the Tukhachevski group and the publication of the completely fallacious "Short Course of History" of the VKP/b.

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In 1937 it seemed to many besides myself that, not only had all organised opposition been wiped out, but that the intrinsic spirit of opposition had itself been destroyed. Some of the weaker type of oppositionist began even to suggest that it was time once and for all to become reconciled with the existing regime; to submit absolutely and finally to the will of the Central Committee. This particular viewpoint was expressed by the not inconspicuous Karl Radek, as well as by a number of Trotskyites and Zinovievites who, by this faint-hearted attitude, destroyed their last semblance of authority among the masses. As far as "oppositionists-in-the-street" were concerned, men who were not aligned to the Trotskyite, Zinovievite, Bukharinite or any other long-established groups, possessed no real experience of underground activity, and still, perhaps naively, believed in the possibility of an ultimate return to liberal rule; there was no question of any open resistance.

At all events, by 1937 I had re-established myself sufficiently well with the Party to be considered worthy of having my black marks erased. My former sins were officially forgiven me. The inner Party bureaucrats, however, never confirmed the removal from my record of the final and most severe reprimand, and this stigma haunted me until my last moments in the Soviet sphere.

In May, 1937, I graduated at the Military Air Academy with the diploma of a Military Engineer Mechanic of Aircraft Construction. The State Qualifying Commission assessed me as a man of considerable promise in the field of scientific research and, at their instigation, I remained in the Aerodynamics Laboratory of the Academy, engaged in scientific engineering work. Fourteen months later, I was appointed head of this laboratory—which ranks second in size and importance among the aviation experimental research centres of the U.S.S.R.—and continued in this capacity until the next Party crisis which occurred just before the time of the German invasion.

Meanwhile, in July, 1937, I had been elected a member of the Amalgamated Party Organisation of the Aerodynamics Laboratory, and appointed to the Chair of Applied Aerodynamics, Fight Dynamics, Hydrodynamics

and Design and Soundness of Aircraft, at the Academy. In addition to my scientific labours, this period was filled with active Party work, and gave me an invaluable insight into the substance of Soviet rule in all its details. From this time onwards, until the last day of my residence in the Soviet orbit (apart from one very short span), I was constantly at the heart of Party affairs, with executive powers.

At the same time, my position as Chief of the Aerodynamics Laboratory brought me into continuous, close contact with a number of central institutions—in particular, the Chief Directorate of Military Air Forces and the Ministry of Aviation Industry, as well as a number of publishing organisations concerned with scientific works. I took part in the deliberations of certain Government Commissions. I was, on occasion, summoned to the Kremlin. Before the outbreak of war with Germany, I wrote a variety of papers upon different aspects of research, some of which were published as pamphlets and others in Soviet journals.

Coupled with all my other work, I lectured on the subjects of aerodynamics and flight dynamics at the Military Air Academy, the Military Engineering Academy, and (now and again) at the Moscow Institute of Engineers of Geodesy and Aerophotography. The study of physico-mathematical and technical cycles had attracted me for a long time—it came easily to me—and, although I was overloaded with work, these subjects continued to captivate me: I found in them a new world of delight. Without any disruption of my normal work, I passed examinations, wrote and elaborated theses, and, in April, 1941, was awarded the much-prized degree of “Candidate of Technical Sciences.”

I could not, however, avoid fresh complications with the Party. This time, they sprang from the Government's new law that people arriving twenty minutes or less late for work were subject to punishment, and, if they were more than twenty minutes behind time, to legal proceedings. One day, one of my best precision mechanics was thirteen minutes late in clocking in. My military-commissar superiors decided to make him a scapegoat: by underhand means, they added eight minutes to his period of lapse, simply in order that he could be sent for trial. As his boss and, indeed, as a human being, I could not stand aside and allow this crude infringement of human rights to proceed

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unchecked. Accordingly, I defended the man by every means in my power. As a result, the whole party-political structure crashed upon me with all its weight. I was accused of supporting an "idler," and, worse, of attempting to defend a worker in a country administered by a dictatorship of the proletariat—a country in which, as a consequence, there was nobody against whom a worker could conceivably be defended since the Government itself was composed of workers!

The basic question of the lateness of one of my staff quickly became a side issue. The argument continued on a point of political principle—could a worker in the U.S.S.R. possibly need defending? I was roundly accused of failing to understand the true nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat; of being unable to comprehend the part played by trade unions under that dictatorship; of revealing "contempt for the sacred laws of the beloved Soviet Government." These were fearful indictments. I was taken from my work, summoned before the Party, and forced to affirm the impossibility of any exploitation of Soviet workers; the democracy inherent in the trades unions; the well-being of the people; the perfect wisdom of Soviet laws, and so on and so forth. It ended with yet another entry in my personal record. I was removed from my own job and transferred to the post of senior assistant director of the scientific research department of the Academy. Outstanding support was given to me, I may say, by a non-Party man, the brilliant Soviet aerodynamist and double Stalin Prize winner, Lieutenant-General of Aviation Boris Nickolaevich Yuriev. All this took place in the early part of 1941.



## CHAPTER III

### Stalin's road to war

**I**T cannot reasonably be denied that the responsibility for the outbreak of the second world war rests mainly with Hitler and Stalin. To many of us in the U.S.S.R., however, it seemed that a measure of reproach was due to the leaders of Great Britain, France and the U.S.A. We could not understand their psychology, nor the reasons behind their apparent irresolution, which so often brought sinister and gratified smiles to the lips of the oligarchs in the Kremlin. This feeling found expression in cynical declarations, at private meetings, that the Western democracies were headed by supine politicians who could hardly be expected to put up any serious resistance.

In what proportions responsibility should be divided between Hitler and Stalin is an academic question. With Lenin's death, the last curb on Stalin's imperialist longings had been removed. He surrounded himself with devoted friends, in whose eyes he could not err. He assumed omnipotence. And at once his true leanings in the sphere of foreign policy became evident. He decided, first, to equip these inclinations with some "theoretical" foundations, to which, unfortunately, the Western world did not, and does not, pay sufficiently serious notice.

Stalin's foreign policy aims are elaborately defined to his book *Problems of Leninism*, which is published in practically all the languages of the U.S.S.R. and possessed, as a matter of course, by almost every Soviet family. It has also received wide publication abroad. In this book, Stalin emphasises that the 1917 October revolution in Russia was no more than a prelude of world revolution, and must be considered merely as an instrument for the acceleration of revolution in all countries of the earth. Here are Stalin's own words:

"The very development of the world revolution, the very process of the breaking away of a number of new countries from imperialism, will be more rapid and more

thorough, the more thoroughly Socialism fortifies itself in the first victorious country " (the U.S.S.R.), " . . . World revolution will develop faster and more definitely, the more effective the assistance given by the first socialist country." This assistance must be expressed, first, by the victorious Socialist nation " achieving the utmost possible in one country for the development, support, and stirring up of revolution in all countries." Again, " the victorious proletariat of one country must arise against the rest of the capitalist world, attract to itself the oppressed classes of other countries, raise revolts in them, and, if necessary, come out even with armed force."

This philosophy is put across unceasingly, in millions of copies of *Problems of Leninism*; by newspapers; over the radio. It is propagated by a vast network of Marxist-Leninist schools; it is the essential theme underlying all branches of study in higher educational establishments. It is driven home at Party meetings, by lectures and by posters. Ask any young pioneer, " What is our final aim? " and he will snap, like an automaton, " World revolution! " And the message is rammed, with exemplary precision, down the throats of soldiers and officers of the Red Army; their ultimate role, after all, is to carry world revolution abroad by force of arms.

If we turn to *The Short Course of History*, which has been made the official Bible of every Communist and Komsomol member, and indeed, of the greater part of the population, we find the following:

" It is clear that, as long as capitalist conditions exist, there will be a danger of capitalist intervention. . . . To destroy the danger of capitalist intervention it is essential to destroy capitalist conditions. From this it follows that the victory of proletarian revolution in capitalist countries is the decisive interest of the workers of the U.S.S.R."

It would hardly be possible to expound the theory of militant imperialism in clearer or less ambiguous terms. The basic Soviet objective is seen to be the infliction, upon all countries in the world, of the totalitarian system exploited in Russia. The Kremlin is convinced that the peoples and the politicians of the West are naive and shortsighted. What need to fear them, or hide general principles from them? Innate laziness, love of comfort,

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a predilection to wishful thinking—these, the Soviet leaders assure each other, are congenital symptoms in the West.

In the top-speed creation of powerful military forces for the export of "world revolution," no inconsiderable part was played in secret collaboration between the Soviet Politbureau and the German Wehrmacht. In return for the "hospitality" of the U.S.S.R., Reichswehr instructors and German technical experts gave remarkable assistance in the training of the Red Army, and in the organisation of industrial plants. Which of us aviators does not remember the German aviation companies, "Derülüft" and "Lufthansa," whose members were as much at home in Moscow as in Berlin? My good friend, Ivan Filippovich Voedilo, frequently piloted the leader of the German Communist Party, Ernst Thaelmann, in German aircraft. Representatives of the reactionary Junker officer corps acted as instructors to the Red Army as early as 1932, before Hitler had come to power, and freely visited even such highly secret institutions as our Academy. Did the signatories of the Versailles Treaty know of this? Naturally—but nothing was done about it.

In the summer of 1936 civil war broke out in Spain. But by then the "base of world revolution" was well equipped. Stalin could afford to act with confidence, and Soviet troops operated in Spain as though they owned the place. Had the U.S.S.R. any national interests which could conceivably justify such intervention? None whatever. The interests of world revolution alone demanded it.

The cynicism which underlay the Soviet venture in Spain can be illustrated by single example. In the summer of 1939, I was a delegate to a Party conference, at which a long speech was made by Army Commissar Shchadenko, Deputy People's Commissar of the U.S.S.R. and Central Committee member, who was one of Stalin's closest associates. He gave us a plain and straightforward account of the Politbureau's machinations in Spain; explained the part played by Red Army forces, Soviet aircraft, and Soviet tank divisions to aid the Republicans, or rather, as he put it, "on the side of Comrades Dias and Ibarruri."

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Spain was by no means the end of the story, however. Shchadenko was careful to emphasise that capitalism would have "many more opportunities to surrender," and that, in order to take advantage of these, we must "fortify our frontiers in the north, the west and the south." He did not elaborate further. It seemed evident, however, that preparations were afoot for some kind of operation on a world scale. Every country has a right to organise its defence by all means in its power, but here the emphasis did not lie on defence. It rested upon declared intentions to force the "decayed West" to surrender. It rested, in short, upon blatant imperialism.

This imperialist policy had already been applied on a practical scale elsewhere than in Spain. In July, 1938, quite a serious clash took place between the Red Army forces and troops of the Japanese army, near Lake Hassan. It was a sort of minor, experimental war, which served to test all facets of Russia's military technique and the battle training of the Soviet Army.

Now thoroughly convinced, as a result of the first Japanese "trial" and the Spanish "experiment," that the Red Army was fully prepared for decisive action, and adopting his favourite technique of lulling his potential victims into quiescence, Stalin gave an open hint of the "readiness" of the U.S.S.R. to "live in peace" with its neighbours. This intimation was let fall at the XVIIIth Congress of the Party, held on March 10th, 1939. Well do I remember the effect of Stalin's "good-neighbour" gambit in Russia. Our ears were still reverberating with Litvinov's Geneva speeches, insisting upon the necessity of countering the aggressive aims of the Nazi-Fascist states by a united front of peace-loving states, as the only means of avoiding a second world war.

Systematic propaganda, too, disseminated for years in the Press, the cinemas and the theatres, had created in the minds of the Soviet people a profound and rooted conviction that the world's main danger-centre was Nazi Germany. Bukharin gave expression to the popular view in his speech at the XVIIth Congress of the Party, when he said: "At present, there are two springboards of attack against us—fascist Germany and imperialist Japan."

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And here was Stalin suddenly declaring that the current hub-bub in the Western democratic Press regarding the Ukraine was aimed at "rousing antagonism against Germany in the Soviet Union, in order to poison the atmosphere and to provoke a conflict between the two nations, based upon no apparent cause!" The customary exhortations for peace-loving states to unite in a single front against war-mongering Germany, Italy and Japan were conspicuously absent from the speech concerned. Seeking justification in the fact that Britain and France had allegedly refused to follow a policy of collective security against the potential aggressors, and had, on the contrary, started secretly urging them towards war, Stalin emphasised that the U.S.S.R. would strengthen its trade relations with *any* countries which did not seek to dislocate Soviet interests. His speech, in fact, was an open assurance to Hitler that, if he did not directly menace the affairs of the U.S.S.R. in any direction, he might continue his policy of aggression as long as he liked. It now only remained for Hitler to reciprocate by undertaking not to interfere with Stalin in the realisation of Soviet plans for expansion. Then relative spheres of influence could be decided upon, and each of these astonishing partners would have a free hand to satisfy his own ambitions.

Such were the deductions which those of us who were critically opposed to the Politbureau made from Stalin's speech. It intrigued us to see that the father of Peoples had started to vilify the political leaders of England and France as "burnt-out bourgeois diplomats" who did not recognise the moral rights of humanity, who condoned and even encouraged aggression in their desire to re-shape the world to their liking.

What ultimate motive had Stalin and Molotov in deciding to ally the Soviet Union with Hitler's bloc against the democracies?

Perhaps the answer to this question can best be summarised in the words of a prominent representative of the Kremlin oligarchy, in conversation with me in mid-winter, 1939. For various reasons, I cannot disclose his name. I can say, however, that he is in continual official contact with Stalin to this day, and as devoted to him as any man

can possibly be devoted to a despot. On this occasion, I visited him in his flat and told him of my concern regarding the new and, as I saw it, dangerous trend of foreign policy at that critical period.

"According to you," he replied mockingly, "the revolutionary programme must be abandoned?"

My answer was that we had already staged three revolutions, and they were quite enough for us to be going along with; as to other countries, their internal affairs were no business of ours provided that they did not attempt to interfere with our progress. My host, though his manner remained friendly, proceeded at once to rebuke me at great length for my "opportunism" and "unprincipled liberalism." My mind, he declared, was "tinged with disbelief in the forces of victorious Socialism." And he concluded triumphantly, "Now, in 1939, we are strong enough to launch world revolution."

At the risk of appearing impolite to an older and more experienced man, I persisted in my opinion that the policy of launching "world revolution" involved deliberate playing with fire, as well as being unnecessary to the welfare of the peoples of the Soviet Union, to whom it could only bring additional misfortune. "There is no country in the world," I said, "which possesses vaster territories than ours; we should devote all the strength we possess to their care and development." He smiled and shrugged his shoulders, then added, "You are quite perverted by liberalism, Grigori Aleksandrovich, perverted. . . ."

The fact that so wise and level-headed a man as this could defend with such confidence and apparent sincerity the policy of "activating world revolution" could only increase my anxiety. There seemed to be little hope remaining that Stalin and Molotov might turn to reason.

In Moscow, we were fully convinced, by Voroshilov's announcement, that Stalin not only wished for a pact with Hitler, but was actively engaged in seeking one. My friend, the eminent Kremlin official, had doubtless expressed no personal viewpoint in his talk with me, but rather the opinion of the Politbureau and of Stalin himself. The question of the moment was that of forcing the pace of "world revolution," first by consolidating the strength of the Red Army, and, secondly, by exploiting, to the

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maximum extent, the differences which existed between the Western Powers and Hitler. World warfare was an essential condition for the establishment of "world revolution." As early as 1928 a Comintern Congress had adopted a series of principles affecting the revolutionary movement from which only one conclusion could logically be drawn—that a second world war was vital to the cause. Indeed, without another war, in the opinion of Bukharin, author of several theses outlining those principles, it was futile to anticipate "annihilation" of capitalism in whole or in part.

Now, this "essential" war was almost within realisation; once it had been launched, it could be relied upon to produce a determined, prolonged and exhausting struggle between Nazi Germany and the Western "plutocracies." Stalin was happily convinced that both sides would at length reach the limits of exhaustion; then would come his own opportunity. He would descend in might upon the weakened combatants, and build his "World-wide Soviet Union," on the ruins of Europe. The prospect was irresistible. He desired war at all costs.

These facts, which are quite incontrovertible, make nonsense of the writings of those "experts on the U.S.S.R." who asserted, and still assert, in Press articles and radio talks that Stalin was as much against war in 1939 as were the Western leaders. The simple fact is that the Soviet dictator wanted war more than anybody. How could he conceivably oppose it when he had been preparing for so long, step by intricate step, for precisely the situation it would present? If he could lay before a Party Congress a brazen proposal to co-operate with Hitler, then clearly this step had been preceded by prolonged consideration of all the eventualities involved. The speech itself was merely the official seal of approval on the results of the preparatory "sounding" work. Documentary evidence of that work is not yet available; it is carefully preserved in the Kremlin's archives. That it exists, there is no possible doubt.

Concerning the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, I need only add one fact, which I learned from an authentic source two days after its ratification. The Kremlin was fully and firmly aware, at the time when the agreement was signed (August 23rd, 1939), that within a few days

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Germany would invade Poland. It also knew beyond any question that Hitler's act of aggression would be followed by Great Britain and France declaring war. Therefore, Stalin and Molotov understood with perfect clarity that, by releasing Hitler from the dread of fighting upon two fronts, they were irreparably inflicting a second world war on mankind. Not for a moment, however, did this fact prevent the Communist Press, in Russia and elsewhere, from extolling the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as a "mighty step towards the strengthening of peace" in Europe.

Swiftly came the Soviet Union's treacherous stab in the back at valiant Poland, trying with hopeless heroism to stem Hitler's invasion. It is plain that Hitler, through his Ambassador, Count Schulenburg, persistently urged his new friend to embark, without further delay, upon the project, in order that Poland, their joint victim, might be crushed with greater despatch. For his part, Stalin assured Ribbentrop—when the latter paid a flying visit to Moscow—that it had been a terrible mistake to allow Poland national independence.

So, on September 17th, 1939, Soviet hordes invaded Poland, at a moment when she was already bleeding to death. The country was brutally hacked in two. This outrage was presented to the Russian people as an act designed to secure "liberation of our blood-brothers, the Ukrainians and the Belorussians."

I remember, as though it were yesterday, the indignation aroused in Moscow by the news. Most people were quite stupefied; they could not understand how a state which had claimed for itself the credit for building Socialism could perpetrate so base and perverted an act of open aggression. Nevertheless, among the Russian people (and, no doubt, abroad as well) there were plenty of cynics who openly applauded Stalin for this sordid performance. In their opinion, the rape of Poland demonstrated statesmanlike sagacity.

Following the assault of Poland, Stalin elaborated his plans for dealing with certain other, long ear-marked victims—the three small and friendly Baltic States, Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania. There was great activity in the Kremlin, designed to secure the agreement of Great



Britain and France to the fate decided upon for those countries. How London and Paris reacted, I have no idea, but I do know that, at this period, Stalin paid little real attention to the West. He wanted territories, not conferences.

Aggression could be justified by a thousand excuses. The Baltic States could be alleged to present a "threat to the security of Leningrad," or to show dangerous signs of becoming "the arena of German aggression." In any event, they clearly needed invading, with the object of securing general peace.

When Soviet troops invaded the three Baltic States (while the Anglo-French leaders, it seemed to us, moved not a finger in protest), many people in the U.S.S.R. were secretly disillusioned. The fact that, at the time of the occupation of these countries, Third Reich representatives were openly welcomed in Moscow indicated that the step had been taken with Hitler's full approval. Since then, secret documents have shown beyond any question that Hitler and Stalin were officially agreed on the division of Europe into spheres of influence.

The ink of the signatures on the pacts with Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania was hardly dry before the Kremlin despots turned upon Finland. Once more, they proffered a treaty of mutual assistance, but the Finns proved obstinate. They are an even more spirited race than my own North Caucasian people, and will endure the harshest privations rather than sacrifice independence. Those who measure the Finnish spirit by the size of the country's population or territory risk making a grave mistake—the precise mistake made by Stalin and Molotov in 1939. The Finns' polite but emphatic rejection of the pact proposed by the Soviet Union reverberated through an astonished Kremlin. It was one of the most stinging slaps in the face ever given to Stalin, though little of the effect it had upon him is known abroad.

The physical stamina and military quality of the Finns was swiftly and courageously demonstrated. Though their numbers were infinitesimal compared with those of the Red Army, their striking power was probably no less than that of the armies of the three Baltic States put together. And the natural barriers to aggression, in the shape of formid-

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able lakes, marshes, forests and rocky hills, gave the country advantages in defence which were almost totally lacking in the Baltic States, with their wide tracts of open land.

The struggle of tiny Finland, with a population of less than four million people, against the U.S.S.R., which, at that time, had close on 180 million inhabitants, was prolonged for almost three and a half months. The Finnish people fought brilliantly, as was borne out by the fact that, following the campaign, the Politbureau found it necessary to make unprecedented changes in the system of battle training adopted by the Red Army.

In the end, the sheer weight of the Red Army's armoured fists forced Finland to capitulate. But Stalin, for sundry reasons, did not think it advisable to occupy the whole country, instead, he confined "liberation" strictly to "ancient Russian" towns and territories on Finnish soil. At the same time, Finland was subjected to an involved peace treaty, which effectually deprived her of any chance of offering armed resistance if the Soviet Government should ever decide to invade her again.

Heavily preoccupied with the Russo-Finnish war, which Molotov and Stalin had mistakenly visualised as a fortnight's exercise, the Kremlin postponed the execution of its plans to effect the subjugation of the Baltic States. Following Finland's noble lesson, the Soviet leaders were frankly apprehensive. Would these countries, too, box Russia's ears? It was essential to proceed with caution, to restore the army to fighting pitch, and to choose an amply propitious moment for the advance into Esthonia, Lavia and Lithuania.

The propitious moment came with the break-through by Hitler's armies on the Western front in June, 1940, when German Panzer Divisions (using Soviet petrol) charged towards Paris. Without wasting a moment, Moscow dramatically confronted the governments of the three Baltic States with notes containing patently false accusations that the Mutual Assistance Pacts had been infringed. The Kremlin demanded the establishment of new and friendlier Baltic governments, plus the right to occupy their territories with Soviet troops. Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania,

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conscious of their own weakness, felt compelled to submit. Without a single shot being fired, Red Army forces exported "world revolution" to three more unwilling markets. Having installed, as the titular head of each of the countries concerned, a figurehead of the same traitorous breed as Kuusinen, the Kremlin proceeded to organise the subsequently notorious Baltic "elections."

I remember a conversation I had with the assistant secretary of the Provincial Party Committee, Nikolai Fedorovich, on the day following the occupation of the Baltic countries by Soviet forces. This Fedorovich was an honest and idealistic Leninist; he still believed that real Socialism could be achieved in our land. A man with the lively temperament of a true southerner, he reacted to the Baltic episode with undisguised exasperation. "How *can* one be a Stalinist after this!" he cried. "It shames us before the whole world! What a ghastly mockery, to call military occupation of small and helpless countries, who present no threat to us, liberation!"

"But you are a high Party official," I remarked. "Of all people, you must remain Stalin's devotee."

"My Party card is the lock on my cell door," he said. I could only agree with him. Whatever one's private views, one could not leave the Communist Party and renounce political life of one's own free will. Expulsion presented the only means of escaping from office—and expulsion nearly always involved losing one's job or being arrested, exiled or shot.

The occupation of the Baltic States was still in course of completion when the Soviet forces were ordered to make an onslaught on Roumania. There they proceeded to annex Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia—a process which, once again, was euphemised as "liberation."

Everybody who heard Molotov's broadcast on June 22nd, 1941, will remember his tearful complaints of the "total unexpectedness" and the "perfidy" of Hitler's assault on Russia. Stalin, too, lamented that the attack had been made without warning, in his speech of July 3rd, 1941.

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Such indignant protestations were pure fables. The fact was that Hitler's onslaught was confidently expected by the Politbureau, the whole of the Officer Corps and the Party executive. The only thing that was not known was the precise date of the attack. There was overwhelming evidence of this fact, but a single instance will suffice to support it.

On April 16th, more than two months before the German invasion, I elaborated my thesis for a Degree before a conference of the Council and teaching staff of the Military Air Academy. Also on the agenda was a speech by the Deputy Chief of the Academy's Political Division, General Klovov, on the current world situation. Klovov was fresh from a meeting at the Chief Political Directorate of the Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R. Here is what he said:

"The position at present is that war may break out at any moment between the U.S.S.R. and Germany. . . . It is essential that we should not be caught unawares. . . . The Germans are already concentrating their troops on our western frontiers. . . . They are carrying out systematic reconnaissance flights across our borders."

All this was said at an open meeting, and Klovov spoke with the authority of the Chief Political Directorate.

The Politbureau expected that the Soviet-German war would start early in August. That was the period which Stalin and Molotov had decided to be the most propitious for launching an attack upon their friends, Hitler and Ribbentrop; they would have preferred an earlier date, but, as a consequence of the internal chaos inseparable from despotism, they were not yet fully prepared.

Instead of waiting for Russia to strike, Hitler levelled the first blow himself. It fell in the early morning of June 22nd, 1941.

I shall remember that day as long as I live. Months before then, I had lost any admiration I ever felt for Stalin and Molotov but, that summer's morning, I cursed them as criminals, in the presence of my family and neighbours. At any other time this would have invited an enormous risk, but now no voice was raised in protest. Everyone agreed.

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No sooner had I listened to Molotov's official announcement of war, on the radio, than my telephone rang. I lifted the receiver.

"Duty officer of the Academy here," said an anxious voice. "The Commander orders you to report immediately."

Hardly knowing what I was doing, I loaded my revolver, shouldered my gas mask and set out for the Academy.

## CHAPTER IV

### Would Moscow fall?

**I**N the U.S.S.R., everything begins and ends with a meeting. Conferences are the delight of the idle busy-bodies of Political Departments, who, for lack of serious work, rejoice in poking their noses into other people's business. Now that war had broken out, these garrulous demagogues were in their element, bristling with their own importance. Their main occupation was in organising meetings and briefing selected orators with "facts" to suit the spirit of the time.

As soon as I reached the Academy, I was summoned to the Political Department, and thus addressed by the chief instructor, one Babkin: "Comrade Tokaev, a general meeting of the Academy will be held in an hour's time. You will make a speech on behalf of the Party organisation of the Directorate."

I stared at him without speaking.

"I am addressing you, Comrade Tokaev!" snapped Babkin.

"I am listening. What can I do for you?" I answered stupidly.

"You must make a speech at the meeting!" he said.

"It hardly seems the thing, just now. . . . This is simply not the time for meetings and speeches. . . ." I rejoined slowly.

"Stop criticising, and act!" he shouted.

"There's no need to make a noise, Comrade Babkin. I am not Private Schweik!" I answered brusquely, and left his office, slamming the door behind me.

Some twenty minutes later, the Chief of the Political Department telephoned me and ordered me to report to him.

"What is the matter with you, Comrade Tokaev?" he asked me, as I entered his room.

"That, I think, is my private affair, Comrade Commissar!" I replied.

"You are a member of the Party and can have no

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private affairs! " he roared. " Don't forget, there's a war on! "

" Thank you for telling me. . . . But I do not entirely understand what you want from me," I said.

" Why did you refuse to make a speech at this afternoon's meeting? "

" Comrade Commissar," I replied, " I did not refuse. The fact is, I just do not know what on earth to speak about. . . . It is impossible to prepare anything at such short notice. . . . I beg you to release me from this duty."

The Commissar raved and stormed for some time, but at heart he was no less disturbed by the news than I was, and it was not long before he quietened down.

The time for the meeting arrived. The enormous main hall of the Academy was festooned with flags, slogans and portraits of Soviet leaders. The audience represented every rung of the military ladder. Yesterday, they carried briefcases, crammed with scientific and technical papers. Today, every man bore a pistol and a gas mask. In the ordinary way, the atmosphere would have been lively—they would have talked and joked among themselves, while awaiting the lecturer. Now their faces wore strained and anxious looks; not a smile could be seen.

Commissar Klokov opened the meeting. His speech was pompous in character, and developed on routine lines. It referred to " this unexpected attack . . . this perfidious onslaught . . . our sagacious Party . . . the supreme wisdom of our leader, teacher and father." It was a sickening performance. Next, the Chief of the Academy, General Sokolov-Sokolenok, spoke. Then came a number of minor orators. " We will bomb them to pieces! " they cried. " We will flay them to the earth with our swords! We will crush them beneath our horses' hooves! "

The triggers of Press cameras clicked, throughout the proceedings. And the following day's *Pravda*, *Izvestiya* and *Krasnaya Zvezda* printed glowing, if entirely inaccurate, reports of the " patriotic spirit " and " boundless love for the Father of Peoples " the meeting had displayed. In actual fact, the gathering was markedly apathetic; even the recurrent mentions of Stalin's name evoked little applause.

Suddenly, to the general surprise, an unheralded speaker

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made his way to the rostrum. It was the distinguished Doctor of Technical Science and non-Party Academician, Boris Nikolseovich Yuriev, one of the greatest Soviet aeronautical experts. His speech was a wholesome corrective to the demagogic bluster of the preceding spokesmen. He warned the assembly that Germany was a strong and dangerous opponent; that Russia would have to face dire and critical times; that we must all be prepared for grievous trials; that although, in the end, our people would win the great struggle, our victory must be achieved at the lowest possible cost to human life. His address was not only sober and intelligent; it was, in all the circumstances, heroic.

But truth does not go down well with vociferous demagogues. The Commissars and political workers began to whisper together. A colleague sitting near to me expostulated "Defeatist!"

To conclude the meeting, Commissar Pavlov read out a nauseating letter to our "leader and teacher," promising that we would "rise like one man in defence of our Soviet fatherland," and "form a living wall behind our invincible Commander." Normally, such letters were greeted with a shattering ovation, generated either by successful propaganda or by the ingrained habit of applauding, which, over twenty years, had become automatic. But, today, instead of the usual ovation, we heard nothing but scattered and dispirited clapping. The dismal trickle of enthusiasm died into silence.

As we made our way out, I said to a close friend of mine, one of the Professors, "Did you notice? The letter to Stalin produced none of the usual hysteria. There must be a reason."

"There is nothing surprising about it," he answered. "My confidential opinion is that Stalin should be hanged!"

"And why are *you* up in arms against him?" I asked.

"Simply because his friend, Hitler, is at this moment desecrating our fields and bombarding our towns," he answered.

These were the words of a Professor previously notorious for his discretion in any discussion concerning the existing regime. Here was a revelation, indeed.



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The staff of the Academy was immediately mobilised for practical instructional work on the latest developments of aviation. The slogan, "Everything for the front," became the watchword of our existence.

From the first, our ranks were swelled by large numbers of pilots and crews whose aircraft had perished by German fire and who were waiting to take over new planes. And so we became possessed of the latest and most authentic information that was to be had from the fighting front. Every detail we received from these eye-witnesses of events was in violent contradiction to those fed to the Russian people in the official bulletins of the "Sovinformbureau." Even at that grim period, when history had dramatically overtaken the Kremlin, Soviet propaganda maintained its outrageous deception. Our true position was far worse than the authorities dared to admit.

Molotov whined about the "unexpectedness," the "treachery" of Hitler's attack, but the measures taken to counter it were patently inadequate. We heard some particularly disquieting news from men fresh from the front, concerning the state of affairs pertaining at one of the main aviation bases, near the town of Lomzha. On Saturday, June 21st, a Party meeting had been held there. Commissars and Party organisers, banging their chests with their fists, had demanded greater discipline, increased "Marxist-Leninist preparedness," keener vigilance, and all the rest of the claptrap. But not a solitary word had been said upon the much more vital subject of maintaining the planes at this depot in a constant state of readiness for action.

At another airfield, on that fateful evening of June 21st, the Political Department had organised a party, with drinks and dancing. Many of the staff got completely drunk; others lingered in conversation with their partners; the rest went to bed.

The peaceful night was suddenly rent by the roar of engines and the rattle of gunfire. Bombs shook the earth. The airfield had been raided by Messerschmitts and Junkers. The staff ran about aimlessly, like madmen. Only then, at the height of the German attack, did they recall that the petrol tanks of the aircraft were empty, their guns unloaded. Within a short space of time, practically

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an entire squadron of Soviet battle planes had been put out of action. In a totally unexpected and ruthless manner, the aviators were turned into infantrymen—but without any infantry commanders to lead them.

I spoke to one of the Russian pilots concerned in this debacle. "Even assuming that the Commissars and Party Organisers wasted their time in useless political chatter, why did you, a student of the Military Air Academy, take no steps to safeguard the station against the attack?" I asked.

"The Commissar of our squadron ordered us not to interfere in his affairs," he replied.

"And what did you do, personally, during the attack?" I asked.

"When the panic started, I tried to gather the men together to take the machine-guns off the bombed aircraft and put up at least some show of resistance, but the Commissar threatened to shoot me if I did not immediately leave the airfield. He nearly *did* shoot me!" he answered.

"And what did the Commissar do, himself?"

"He took one of the undamaged cars, loaded it with political junk, and made off at top speed for a safe area."

Such was the way the war began on, at least, certain sectors of the main front. Party spokesmen made routine speeches, clamoured for "vigilance," and yet condoned the most criminal negligence. To a Soviet political worker, educated in the reactionary era of Stalinism, "vigilance" implied no more, of course, than the extirpation of any kind of deviationist thought; it certainly did not embrace readiness for battle.

When Molotov and Stalin lamented the "unexpectedness" and "treachery" of Hitler's attack they were, among other things, endeavouring to camouflage the supine indolence of their own Commissars in forward positions of the battle area.

In no country in the world have the common people had to sacrifice more than in the U.S.S.R. Taxes, annual State loans, compulsory military service, directed labour in industry and agriculture, difficulty in obtaining food, and all manner of other burdens have been their continual lot for many years past.

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They bore all this, with exemplary patience, during two decades, believing that it was contributing to the defences of the country. Soviet propaganda never failed to assure them that there was no force in the world which could stand up to the Red Army. The People's Commissar of Defence, Marshal Voroshilov, arrogantly proclaimed that, should war come, the Red Army would fight only on the enemy's territory; that Russian soil would remain inviolate. Were not our Western frontiers equipped with mighty fortifications—"Stalin's ramparts"? Nobody had seen them, of course, but everyone knew they were there.

But now that war had started, the peoples of the U.S.S.R. began to wonder exactly how the enormous State funds had been expended. Voroshilov's jabber of war confined to the enemy's territory no longer fooled anybody. The German army was rolling across the Russian countryside.

In face of this desperate situation, the Political Bureau could think of nothing cleverer to do than to appoint Voroshilov, Timoshenko and Budyenni as Commanders on the principal fronts. These men may have made good cavalry officers during the civil war; they certainly possessed none of the qualities essential for the direction of large-scale mechanised warfare. Stalin and Molotov appointed them for Party reasons alone, and thus, by blind adherence to military-commissar ethics, imposed a tremendous and perfectly needless handicap on the country. Had there been no greater military experts than these gentlemen available, one would not have complained. But this was not the case.

During the early weeks of the war, these equine warriors succeeded in doing nothing save retreat before the Germans. Red Army artillery, infantry, tanks and planes were alike annihilated. I do not know what the effect was elsewhere, but, in our Academy, the Chiefs of Staff no longer tried to disguise their indignation. I remember one typical conversation which took place in the office of the chief of the Scientific Research Department.

"Our troops have abandoned Minsk," cried an engineer colonel. "What a damned disgrace! The authorities never ceased making speeches about industrialisation, and collectivisation, about the invincibility of the Red Army,

and we walked the street, half-clothed and hungry, to pay for their cracked schemes. Now everything is perishing before our eyes. Who the devil is responsible for all this? WHO?" He suddenly rounded on Stalin's portrait, which, as was customary, dominated the room. "Well, what about it, Comrade Stalin?" he snarled. "Where is your genius now? What have you set in motion? Why did you exterminate the flower of the Red Army, leaving nothing but Horse Marshals to command our troops?"

If senior officers spoke like this, what must the workers, the peasants, the mass of the people be feeling? Had they not even greater reason for indignation? In my mind, I went over the whole fearful story of Stalin's epoch. Collectivisation had killed all belief in the future in the hearts of the Russian peasantry. The liquidation of the falsely incriminated Kulaks had left an irremediable scar on the body of the State. The fear and frenzy of the Soviet rulers had resulted in the extermination of vast numbers of the most capable people in the country. The general population had been dragooned into passive acceptance of a barrack-line existence, directed in every particular by Commissars. The military ventures in Finland, Spain, the Baltic States, Poland, Bessarabia and elsewhere had shaken public confidence in the Politbureau in general and Stalin in particular, while the military alliance with Hitler and the refusal to co-operate with the Western democracies had convinced most thinking people that Bolshevism was degenerating into open Fascism. This, indeed, was the logical consequence of unchecked Stalinism.

I have already indicated that I belonged to an underground group of Party members whose views directly conflicted with the official programme. To this end, indeed, all other secret oppositionist groups, the war presented an almost insoluble problem. Each and every one of us loathed, with every fibre of his mind and heart, Stalin's regime of barrack dictatorship, and many of us thought Stalin himself a criminal who ought to be hanged. We no longer had any illusions that he might retract from his monstrous path in the interests of the country. On the contrary, there was every reason to suppose that he would remain a tyrant and despot, consumed with the notion of

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expanding his dictatorship to cover the world, all the days of his life. Quite indubitably, he would wage the war against Germany with the same degree of indifference to the welfare of the people as he had revealed in his brutal experiments in "constructing Socialism." And we, the people, would pay the price.

Did this mean, then, that our essential task was to overthrow Stalin and his circle by any means possible? Should we urge the people, as had Lenin during the first world war, to bring about the defeat of their own country? We discussed these questions long before the conflict with Germany started, for we knew in advance that war was inevitable.

Our policy was finally formulated at a secret conference held at the House of the Scientists, in Kropotkin Street, Moscow, on July 5th, 1941.

We were mainly guided by these considerations:

First, any tactics conducive to the defeat of our country by Hitler were quite unthinkable. Romantic visions, on Leninist lines, of a Russian refusal to fight resulting in similar action by the armies and peoples of Nazi Germany, England and France, with consequent mass risings against "capitalists and landowners" all over Europe, were manifest moonshine. Indeed, it was obvious to us all that, if we adopted this technique, we should only help Hitler to achieve a swifter and less costly victory over the Red Army, thus elevating the morale of his troops, consolidating his influence over the German people, and making the task of the democratic countries more complicated than ever.

There remained the second alternative—to make our objective the overthrow of Stalin and his clique, so that power might be transferred to worthier hands while the nation's war-effort continued apace. The armed forces, thus released from the oppression of Party dictatorship, would then, we thought, pursue the fight against Hitler with incomparably greater efficiency than they had so far revealed.

We weighed up this line of procedure with all the concentration and precision of which we were capable. Theoretically, it appeared justified from both a tactical and

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a moral point of view. But the practical problems it presented were enormous.

With things as they were, any attempt to break the power of the Kremlin, either by a national revolution or through a palace insurrection, could only be made in the certainty that it presented no risk of plunging the country into chaos and anarchy and hence hampering Russia's defence in the face of a foreign invader. If such a project were to succeed, there would have to be available a free and enlightened "shadow cabinet," capable of taking over the reins of government smoothly and instantly, and of combining direction of internal affairs with uninterrupted and vigorous prosecution of the war. In the absence of such an organisation, any revolution would almost inevitably lead to catastrophe, involving a widespread collapse at the front and an open road to Moscow for Hitler.

It was evident that not even the shadow of a shadow cabinet could be discerned. Military-commissar dictatorship, with all its apparatus of terror, spying and mutual denunciation, had succeeded, during long years of operation, in destroying all the main forces of opposition. There remained only mute, underground discontent, crystallised in numbers of scattered subversive groups such as our own.

Long discussion convinced us that there was nothing for us to do save give our all in defence of our motherland against the Nazi invaders. Much as we detested Stalin and his regime, his presence as the head of the State did not affect the main issue. Indeed, we were quite determined that, if any situation arose during the course of the war which offered a chance of liquidating the Kremlin leaders we would not even seek to take advantage of it. We decided, if it came to our ears that any other secret resistance group planned a coup of this description, we would do our utmost to dissuade them from attempting it.

On July 19th, 1941, orders were received that our Academy must be evacuated to the east, and continue its work in the town of Sverdlovsk. When the Chief announced this, at a secret emergency meeting of the main staff, we were astounded. Evacuation intimated that affairs at the front were infinitely worse than we had supposed.

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One Engineer Major Pavlenko and I were summarily instructed to head the first convoy of military evacuees to Sverdlovsk. As we had anticipated, the Academy staff had to face a good deal of abuse from those who were staying in Moscow. Women, in particular, did not attempt to hide their feelings, yelling "Shame!" and "Cowards!" at us in the public streets. When I called for one of our Lieutenant Colonels, to take him and his wife to the convoy assembly point, the good lady termed us both poltroons, and swore that she would not let her husband go near Sverdlovsk. When he mildly remarked that it was quite impossible to disobey military orders, she slapped his face and hurled his belongings, one by one, from the flat.

All my efforts to persuade this formidable lady to accompany us proved in vain. She insisted that she would stay in Moscow, fire-watching or aiding the war effort in some other way, while the heroes of the Academy skulked in the depths of the country.

Such cowardice as was actually shown on the convoy route from Moscow to Sverdlovsk was mainly displayed by those who were, allegedly, the boldest and most militant of Stalin's "eagles"—the Political Commissars. During a night air-raid which greeted us in the Podmoskovnyi district, for instance, Commissar Illarionov buried himself in a refuse-pit, where, quite by chance, I discovered him quaking in terror. Mistaking the perspiration which bathed his face for blood, he shrieked that he had been wounded. Having reassured him that he was quite unhurt, I asked why he had chosen this astonishing type of shelter. He answered, "I had no choice. The Germans were aiming their bombs at me!"

Life in Sverdlovsk presented a distressing picture.

Our nation was passing through the most tragic days it had known since the Tartar invasion in the thirteenth century. The enemy was advancing along a wide front, penetrating deeper and deeper towards the heart of the country. The Red Army so irresponsibly termed "unconquerable," was, in fact, being conquered in every direction. Convoys of wounded were flowing from the front. Spearheads of the enemy's shock troops were puncturing great gaps in our line. To block these, raw volunteers, male and female, were rushed from the East to the battle area.

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Sverdlovsk, however, swarmed with Colonels and Generals from Moscow, who, between them, disorganised every local activity. The town was packed with shameless evaders of military service, masquerading as "scientific experts, engaged in work of national importance." The social inequality, which so strongly marked Soviet society at all times, here assumed unprecedented proportions. Those who did nothing had everything: those who worked from morning till night almost starved.

The Party bureaucrats of the Academy's Political Departments lived well enough. They fed in private dining-rooms and buffets. They had a special ration of cigarettes and other small comforts. But the scientific and teaching staff, who were employed in vital experimental and training work, had no provision of any kind made for their welfare, and were almost continually hungry. They were compelled to beg the Commissars for short periods of leave, in order to go on foraging expeditions. Venerable professors and doctors of science, with a whole host of junior officers, gathered their personal effects together and set off for Kazakhstan, Bashkiriya, Udmurt, or the Tartar Province, where they bartered their possessions for flour, potatoes, cereals, meat and bread. They came back with bulging sacks on their backs, having tramped through trackless stretches of country for, perhaps, ten days at a stretch.

Following my return to Sverdlovsk from a brief assignment in Moscow, I had nowhere at all to live for almost a fortnight. I slept in any corner that came to hand. About the tenth day, I found accommodation in a flat attached to the Ural Industrial Institute. The flat consisted of four rooms, a kitchen (in which we had to wash) and a W.C. There was no bathroom, and no gas for cooking.

All through the day we worked at the Academy's experimental hangars. Our hours of rest were as few as they were irregular. No one delivered a thing to us. Berezkin drew, at scheduled intervals, 600 grammes of poor-quality black bread and a few ersatz sweets in lieu of sugar. Sokolov and I received 700 grammes of the same revolting substance and even fewer sweets. We took it in turn to collect buckets of hot water from the house next door, to drink with the bread. Those were our total rations.



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I had arrived in Sverdlovsk at the end of July, 1941. Six weeks later, a new and significant situation began to develop.

I have already said that, during the early weeks of the Soviet-German war, our main front was cut to pieces, and ceased to exist as something solid and whole. The remnants of our forces, under Voroshilov, Timoshenko and Budyenni, were in full disorganised and undisciplined retreat. They could no longer be classed as an army; they were merely a horde of demoralised individuals. Certain rare, scattered units retained some semblance of fighting spirit, and continued at least to harass the enemy on their line of retreat. But the Germans were pressing at the approaches to Leningrad, Moscow and Kharkov. One more all-out offensive, and Hitler could have captured the capital.

But incredibly and, from our point of view, miraculously, the Nazi armies stopped short in their tracks. This was the greatest gift of fate Stalin ever received. Naturally enough, Soviet propaganda exploited the news in every way to which it could turn its hand, as a triumphant means of bolstering the morale of the troops and the civil population.

Suddenly in the districts of Elnya and Yartsevo, fresh Soviet forces appeared and launched a surprise attack against a very large number of Germans who were spending most of their time in swimming and sun-bathing. The astonished Germans were forced to retreat. It is not necessary to enquire how far they retreated. The essential and, indeed, overwhelming fact, from the viewpoint of the Kremlin propagandists, was that the Germans had been pushed back for the first time since they invaded the country.

Nevertheless, our intelligence service swiftly reported that Hitler was concentrating his resources for a "final" assault on Moscow. Though the Press was careful to conceal this news, alarm spread through the higher spheres of the military hierarchy. Instead of mass move back to the capital, volunteers were sought for the purpose of reinforcing the small garrison we had left behind there at the old Academy.

Pavlenko and I were among the few staff members who answered the call. Almost all who did so were engineers;

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only two Commissars from the Political Department volunteered, and one of them was not allowed to go, on the grounds that he did not merit the Party's confidence.

Moscow was much calmer than one might have supposed from rumours current in Sverdlovsk. It was, first of all, a beautiful autumn, graced by clear, sunny days. There were no heavy air raids, and few warning sirens were heard. Occasionally, lone German reconnaissance planes appeared in the sky and dropped one or two small calibre bombs at random. At night, every now and again, parachute bombs floated down the sky. Anti-aircraft guns roared reassuringly: people were getting comfortably accustomed to their noise.

The city had largely been abandoned by the staffs of its main institutions. The people who stayed there were of two main categories: those who found it the best centre in which to feather their own nests, despite the scattered bombardments, and those who genuinely loved Moscow as the eternal focal point of Russian history. To do him justice, Stalin remained at the Kremlin with the inner governing body of the Party.

The Germans knew perfectly well that Moscow had been substantially evacuated. Their planes dropped leaflets, mockingly printed, "Don't trouble to bolt—we'll catch you wherever you go!"

All the same, they did practically nothing for two and a half months. So much might have been achieved in the U.S.S.R. during that period of respite before the storm broke. Reserves could have been assembled for action; mauled divisions could have been re-grouped and strengthened; the defence of the capital could have been organised.

But the only thing that was organised, in every direction, was chaos. Totally irrelevant factors, such as "Socialist competition" in industry, percentages of targets reached and output quotas achieved, vied with the everlasting heresy hunt for "deviationists" in obscuring the real issue of the country's peril and how it could best be averted. Some revealing details of the lack of official preparedness were given to me by a former student of the Academy, Anya, whom I chanced to meet in the street.

She looked dreadful. Her clothes were dirty and ragged,

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and it seemed that she had been building fortifications. "We're erecting anti-tank obstacles on the outskirts of Moscow. We're creating a defence belt round the capital of our democratic, Socialist fatherland," she told me ironically.

"And how is the work progressing?" I asked.

"It's enough to drive you to tears, to see what is going on. Almost all the workers are women. At the rate we're going, it will take an entire new Five-Year Plan to build anything like a defence belt. Will Hitler wait as long as that, do you think? We have no spades, you see; no pickaxes, no transport, no concrete. The result is that few of us can do any work at all. No food is provided for us. The whole thing is quite hopeless. For years we've heard of nothing but the might and invincibility of the Red Army, and now that war has come, women are digging tank-traps round the capital with their bare hands!" She almost wept with despair.

The Germans launched their "final" drive against the capital in October. The alarm flashed through the Moscow garrison. The Sovinformbureau, however, maintained its bland deception of the public by reporting only the most meagre details of the attack.

On October 8th, despite a stream of official bulletins prating of "successful retaliatory action" by our troops, the families of the inhabitants of the Kremlin began to leave Moscow. The same night, a convoy containing the Central Committee's secret files departed for an unknown destination. It was even rumoured that Lenin's body was spirited from its tomb and despatched to the country, but officials I spoke to refused to confirm or deny this. On October 10th, the few remaining Party institutions in the city were ordered to leave. Members of the inner hierarchy were somewhat unnecessarily warned that they must not, on any account, permit themselves to fall into German hands. It was obvious that our rulers were convinced that the Nazis would soon enter Moscow.

All these facts leaked out, of course, and became common knowledge, but no official directives to the population were issued by the Government. The murmur of public discontent was growing, and nearing explosion point.

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Some weeks earlier a "fighter battalion" had been organised from the small garrison at the Academy, made up of engineers on the teaching staff. Our armoury consisted of revolvers, an extremely limited amount of ammunition, gas masks and a few rifles. Some machine-guns had been removed from training aircraft for us, but we could not obtain any ammunition for them. We did not possess a single hand-grenade. The enterprising engineers, however, unearthed somewhere in a cellar a large quantity of empty bottles and filled them with flame liquid. At that time, such primitive devices were among the main anti-tank weapons of the Red Army.

Though we were merely a handful of officials, large responsibilities were assigned to us. The Academy stood in an area of particular interest to the Germans, for several aircraft factories were concentrated there in addition to Moscow's main airport. The High Command expected that German paratroops would descend on the Central Airfield at any moment.

The German bombing offensive against Moscow began on October 3rd. The efforts of the few Russian fighter planes equipped to combat it were not successful. Our anti-aircraft guns, however, were both ample and effective. We were desperately short, not only of aircraft, but also of trained crews to fly them. And the chief training centre was our Academy, which shuddered continuously from the racket of nearby ack-ack guns. I practically lived there. Night and day, I went about in a heavy leather coat with a large fur collar, a hat with earflaps, and long army boots. I was equipped with a revolver, a gas mask, a field officer's haversack and a Finnish dagger. My pockets were filled with sandwiches and cigarettes (a nice change from Sverdlovsk). I was ready for anything.

In the Academy, we were fully aware of the fabulous sums being spent on creating an air force. And we knew that our aircraft factories were good, our fliers certainly no less heroic than their German counterparts. What, then, was wrong? Most people had a simple answer to this question—"The Kremlin bureaucrats and despots are ruining everything." Such criticisms, which, in pre-war days, it would have been unthinkable to voice, could then be heard quite openly. Indeed, panic at the approaching

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crisis seemed to have circumscribed both the vigilance and the normal omnipresence of the Secret Police. Our small Fighter Battalion, for instance, contained no representative of the NKVD, and only one man from the Political Department—Commissar Mishin, who had come with us from Sverdlovsk. Never before, in the history of the Soviet Union, had people been able to express their real opinions in freedom and safety—nor have they since.

On the morning of October 12th, the Soviet Information Bureau at last circulated the news which everyone feared. Even they had decided that it could no longer be concealed. The Germans had succeeded in breaching our lines on a wide front.

At the Academy, we were ordered to stop all tuition. I went home, reflecting grimly that, in the whole house, there was not a single person besides myself who was capable of defending it when the Nazis entered the city. The men were either on active service or evacuated with their departments to safe areas in the country. And any families possessed of means had left Moscow long ago. Only the very poor, the sick, the aged, and women and children remained. I shall never forget the bitterness of those sad, abandoned people.

I called at the offices of the People's Commissariate of Defence, in the Chistye Prudy district. The only person present was Major General Boris Borisovich—an invalid! I found him cursing his vanished colleagues for their cowardice, and telephoning in all directions in a desperate effort to organise a corps of volunteers to defend the city.

It is hardly necessary to say that his efforts were in vain. The people he telephoned had lost all initiative, and were entirely bewildered by the course of events. Typical of the response to his telephone calls was a brusque comment by an elderly Colonel—"I will fight under the command of nobody but my own General." His General, the man who gave him his orders, had fled from the city: hence he would not aid in its defence.

On the morning of October 15th, it was announced that the President of the Moscow Provincial Council of Workers' Deputies, Pronin, would make an important broadcast. Everybody hoped that he would have something really con-

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structive to say concerning last-minute arrangements for Moscow's defence, and the state of affairs at the front. The anxiously awaited hour arrived, but the announcer said: "Comrade Pronin's broadcast has been postponed!" The people waited. Then the announcer repeated a similar message. They went on waiting. Ultimately, Pronin did not speak at all, but a voice gave us the momentous news that the route of one of the city's tramcar services was to be changed. I happened to be in the square outside the Kursk Station when this insane statement was blared by the loud-speakers.

I learned later that Pronin could not make his broadcast because he was engaged in a stormy conference at the Kremlin. This conference was, indeed, historic.

The main problem discussed was whether Moscow should be surrendered without a struggle, or whether the remaining inhabitants should be organised for street fighting in the city's defence. It is doubtful if Stalin has ever talked at such length as he did on that occasion! He had reason to fear that neither the remnants of the army nor the people would remain loyal to him. Thus, the conference devolved into an inquisition respecting the personal devotion to the regime of every member and candidate member of the Party's Central Committee and all Secretaries of Republican, Provincial and Regional Committees of the Party who were present. Each one of them replied in impassioned terms, protesting his irrevocable loyalty to the Father of Peoples, but their words did not all ring with complete conviction.

It was Molotov who suggested that Moscow should be surrendered, and that Hitler should be approached with the offer of a truce. Some members of the Politbureau were frankly in favour of this proposal; others, led by Shcherbakov and other Moscow Party executives, firmly opposed it. Others again, including Stalin, could not make up their minds. Mikoyan was the only one who flatly declared that negotiating with Hitler would be the act of a Judas towards the Western Allies.

At length, it was decided by majority vote that no approach should be made to Hitler, and that Moscow should be defended to the death. It was victory for Shcherbakov and his colleagues. Stalin voted with them, stating, with

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sudden finality, that the surrender of the city would mean "the destruction of Soviet power." Though he refused to leave the capital himself, he accepted a proposal that its defence should be entrusted to Zhukov, and agreed not to interfere personally with whatever arrangements that excellent soldier might make. This was the greatest service Stalin ever rendered to Moscow.

The poorer classes, left behind in the city, made panic-stricken efforts to flee to safety. Some managed to get away in goods trucks, crowded like cattle, but the majority waited fruitlessly at the stations for trains to carry them.

As I walked through the streets of Moscow, from Kursk station to the Academy, along the Sadovyi Circuit and the Ulitsa Gorkago, I watched the faces of the people, and thought: "Stalin's fate hangs by a fine hair. He is in greater peril from the Muscovites than he is from Hitler. One careless step and the public wrath will descend upon the Kremlin."

It will help to provide some conception of the frame of mind which prevailed at that fateful time if I outline a few incidents which, though perhaps insignificant in themselves, were characteristic of the explosive feelings which swayed the population of Moscow. The events concerned were known to very few people in the U.S.S.R., and to nobody abroad.

The first concerned the largest aircraft factory in Moscow. No sooner had the panic started among the Party bosses than the directors of this vital establishment announced to the bewildered staff that all work must cease forthwith. Only the magnitude of the threat which hung over the city prevented the workers from breaking out into mass rebellion against the Soviet Government. Their personal and patriotic feelings were alike appalled. In some of them, the reactions of fury and shame were so intense that Moscow's peril took second place to a hazardous determination to overthrow the dictatorship of the Politbureau by means of a plot.

For obvious reasons, I can describe this plan in only the vaguest outline, and, for fear of harming brave men still bearing the Soviet yoke in Moscow today, can neither name its initiators nor detail the resources at their disposal.

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On the night of October 16th, an officer I had known for some years, and whom I will call "V," came to visit me. He told me, in deepest secrecy, of the project to initiate a "palace insurrection," aimed at obliterating the central core of the Soviet dictatorship with one ruthless blow. The object of his approach to me was to find out whether I would take part in this venture myself and, in my turn, enrol some of my own friends into the small circle of conspirators.

But, as I have already explained, my friends and I were firmly convinced that any proposal of this kind was not worthy of contemplation. Accordingly, I did all I could to convince "V" that his policy was mistaken. Our argument grew stormy, but I would not retract. Without having reached any kind of agreement, we departed, as dawn was breaking, to see the man who had authorised my visitor to make contact with me. This was an old political compatriot of mine, though one with whom I disagreed, more often than not, on questions of principle. He had talked for years about the "prowess of Russian terrorists" and the necessity of such gentlemen being employed in the task of accomplishing the "fourth Russian revolution," which he aspired to lead in person. He had been profoundly impressed by the mental attitude of the workers at the aircraft factory, and was now busily engaged, with some of their wilder representatives, in organising this entirely irresponsible coup, for the fulfilment of which he considered an ideal and never-to-be-repeated opportunity had been created. He was superbly convinced that, at the sound of the first shot fired against the Party Chiefs, the workers would rise like one man to join his ranks, together with the bulk of the armed forces. Hitler would then, he insisted, agree to peace negotiations without delay.

I tried, with all the power at my command, to indicate the dangers and uncertainties of the course he proposed. "How can you be sure," I asked him a dozen times, "that such a rising, even if it came about, would induce Hitler to agree to peace discussions? The inevitable result of any attempt at rebellion now, to my mind, would be an intensification of the present chaos and a final collapse of resistance



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against the Nazis, for whom the gates of Moscow would be thrown open."

It was easy enough, I went on, to plan insurrections; the difficulty lay in putting them into practice. Theoretically, it appeared possible to seize the Telegraph Building—perhaps the NVD headquarters. But where would that get us, when the Kremlin's walls themselves contained a fully-fledged Military School? Again, nobody outside the Kremlin knew the extent of its underground lines of communication with the outside world; no one beyond a small circle of experts was even aware of the true location of the network of direct wires which linked it to the various institutions which carried the Party's will to all areas of the vast country. And who could foretell what would be the reaction of such organisations as the People's Commissariate of Defence to a public rising?

Any failure of the coup—and it seemed to me that failure was quite inevitable, I repeated—would exact a tremendous price from the country. Hitler would not hesitate to enslave and exploit the nation's manpower and physical resources, both of which he would find invaluable in achieving his dream of conquering the world for a thousand years. He would build a temple of Nazi barbarism on the ruins of freedom—with Russia's aid.

I cannot claim that my reasoning had any decisive influence in preventing this wild-cat venture being essayed, though, subsequently, I was severely reproached for my timorousness by some of its strongest supporters. The fact remains that no attempt at a rising was made, and Stalin was saved from what could only have been, to say the least, a delicate situation.

Today it is fashionable to call Stalin the saviour of Moscow. History knows better. Moscow was saved by nobody but Hitler. By his sudden halt in the summer of 1941, when his forces were advancing upon Smolensk, the Nazi Fuhrer gave an irreparable blow to his own intentions, and rendered a service to Stalin in excess of the Kremlin strategists' wildest dreams. Later, when a group of us received medals "For Victory over Germany," a wit rightly remarked that the first medal cast should have been presented posthumously to Adolf Hitler.

That hysterical genius, for a reason which must ever

remain unfathomable, delayed any correction of his error until October, 1941, when he launched an attack by means of which (as I was personally assured by a former Colonel of the Wehrmacht after the war) he intended to "knock the remaining teeth from Stalin's jaw." But, as he swung for this final blow, he suddenly found himself confronted with a new and formidable opponent—the autumn mud which bogged the approaches to Moscow.

For some months past, the weather had been exceptionally good. Until the end of September, fine, dry days had followed each other almost monotonously. Then came a spell during which profuse condensation was combined with a heat unnatural for the time of year. The soil dissolved into a sticky morass. The roads—bad enough already—became mere quagmires which even a Russian peasant, with roadless generations behind him, could hardly negotiate.

In the old days, frost was generally considered to be an advancing army's worst enemy. But fully mechanised warfare has changed all that. The German forces approaching Moscow across trackless bogs, beneath ceaseless rain, found their tanks and armoured vehicles almost immovable burdens instead of swift aids to progress. Motors constantly boiled; mechanisms became clogged with mud and ceased to function; the whole tempo of the advance was slowed to crawling pace. Morale and organisation alike sank to a desperate ebb. Mobility, the main quality of a mechanised force, was lost, and the Nazi vehicles became almost static targets, while whole units of expert fighting men were turned into rheumatic cripples. The armoured troops became so exhausted physically and psychologically, that their efficiency was reduced to an appallingly low level, and the supporting infantry were transformed into a drenched, dirty and depressed caricature of an army.

First Hitler had saved Moscow; now mud was doing it. Both Stalin and Hitler were well aware of this. Wretched weather continued. The Wehrmacht Colonel I have mentioned assured me, in 1945, that, in struggling to release themselves from the mud, the German armoured troops used up enough petrol to carry them to the Volga.

But, by December 4th, 1941, conditions had improved so greatly that yet another "final" and "decisive"

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assault on Moscow was launched by the Germans. This time, they reached the Dmitrov-Zvenigorod-Narofominsk-Serpukhov line. Moscow, at last, seemed irretrievably doomed.

But then the frost came. The terrible cold froze not only Hitler's troops, but his synthetic petrol. The Germans, who had expected to find snow in October, and failed to discover anything more than mud, had withdrawn winter clothes and equipment from their forces. And no man, however healthy he might have been, could have stood up to the December frosts outside Moscow in summer uniform.

Intelligence reports advised us that the cold had paralysed the German armies. Everything froze; men, vehicles and weapons. There were stories of whole Companies being killed by the cold. Had Stalin possessed strong and co-ordinated forces around Moscow at that time, it would have been quite possible to exterminate the invaders.

The shivering invaders augmented their clothing supplies at the expense of the local population. They openly looted garments, blankets, snow boots, even rags—anything they could lay their hands on. It became the fashion with our cartoonists to depict "Fritz" wrapped in blankets, sheets, tablecloths and all kind of household equipment. But this outright robbery, by arousing popular wrath, had an excellent effect upon the national morale. Even the official propaganda took a more incisive line than it had hitherto. Its chief exponents, Ehrenburg and Aleksei Tolstoi, now besought us to "kill Germans" instead of merely to "kill Hitlerites."

Moscow itself bristled with new determination. Volunteers daily swelled the ranks of the National Guard. Barricades appeared in the streets; the capital was alive with anti-tank traps and machine-gun posts.

On December 6th, the Soviet forces launched a counter-attack. On most sectors of the Moscow front, the frozen Germans had only one thought in their minds—to retreat with all possible speed. There could be no question of serious opposition. Enormous quantities of equipment fell into Russian hands. In the frozen wastes before the city, the Germans lost 250,000 dead, wounded and captured. Within a month, the Nazis were thrown back from the walls of the capital to the Gzhatsk-Rzhev line.

## CHAPTER V

### The last years of the war

ON February 23rd, 1942, the country celebrated Red Army Day with extraordinary enthusiasm.

By that time I was back in Sverdlovsk, and was instructed to make a speech on the great day. I spoke at one of the largest factories. Having meted out full praise to the heroic efforts of our soldiers and the people on the home front, I made some reference to the invaluable assistance given to us by "General Frost" and "General Mud" on the Moscow front. Then I emphasised that we had no grounds for excessive optimism; the Germans, I pointed out, would undoubtedly launch fresh attacks in the fairly near future. Though propagandists might claim that the Germans knew nothing about the art of waging war, it was no good over-simplifying the problem before us, I ended. Victory would demand the best efforts of each of us.

As I might have foreseen, the local Party boss, Ivan Andreevich Grebenshchikov, declared that I had underrated the abilities of our Generals to direct battles "in Stalin's manner," and given a false impression of the strength of the "dumb Germans." He was good enough to denounce me on these lines to the Town Party Committee, who duly passed on the complaint to the Academy's Political Department. I was called before the Chief of the Department, Commissar Danilov.

"How did your speech go, Comrade Tokaev?" he asked me.

"Fairly well, I think," I answered, in some apprehension.

"In what light did you present the Germans' defeat before Moscow?" he demanded.

"I don't quite understand."

"Stop hedging!" he snapped. "According to you, had there been no mud and frost, we'd have given up Moscow. Why did you prate of nothing but the damned weather? Why did you pretend that it helped us out?"

Why did you go out of your way to give a completely wrong interpretation of events? "

" But, surely, the mud and the frost *did* help us? " I said.

" Nothing of the sort ! Neither frost nor mud had a thing to do with it. Stalin's strategy, executed by our magnificent Party, alone beat the Germans ! "

" I never denied that Stalin's strategy won the day, Comrade Commissar ! " I replied.

" But the fact must be emphasised on every occasion ! " he said.

" I understand, Comrade Commissar. "

" You appear to be in danger of forgetting, Comrade Tokaev, that, as our leader and teacher has said, there are no bastions which Bolsheviks cannot conquer ! Had there been no trace of mud or frost our Party would still have smashed the Germans. Why ? Simply because it worked under Stalin's guidance ! "

" I have no doubt of the fact, Comrade Commissar. "

I made no attempt to argue with him. I agreed that I " had not expressed my thoughts clearly " in my address, and assured him that I would do better in future. Nevertheless, he continued to lecture me unremittingly concerning my alleged lack of appreciation of the true strength and invincibility of the Red Army, and my euphemistic evaluation of the prowess of Hitler's army of bunglers. To my shame, I concurred, in a thoroughly unprincipled manner, with all that he said. He quoted passages from Stalin's speeches ; I listened in reverence. I even interpolated little flattering phrases, such as " Unlike myself, you are a man of vast political experience ! " or " I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your valuable advice ! "

" I am giving you the benefit of my experience, " he said placidly. " It is your duty to derive from my words practical conclusions which will assist you in your work. I hope there will be no necessity for me to send for you again. "

Once more, I assured him that I would remember his exhortations as long as I lived. He was used to obsequious agreement, and seemed pleased with my behaviour. But I could not be quite sure how I stood. The Political bosses were beginning to feel their feet again, after their period

of ignominious panic, and were all set for another campaign against any heretics who dared to express opinions which deviated by a hair's breadth from the Party line.

The Commissars insisted on optimism, but glee cannot be produced to order. Not everyone found himself capable of viewing the generally catastrophic position at the front as a cavalcade of victory. One Major on our teaching staff swiftly fell foul of the freshly vigorous NKVD. All he did was to remark, amongst a group of friends, that "taking it all round, the Germans were advancing and we were retreating, while, in the battles before Moscow, the weather had saved us." These were simple facts, known to everybody in the U.S.S.R., and only denied by senior Party members. The unfortunate Major, however, was at once accused of "dangerous defeatism." The routine procedure followed. He was invited to visit the Special Department, where he was politely received and arrested without explanation. The NKVD then launched an investigation into his private life. His wife, Engineer Captain Tsillya Zarkhina (also an officer at the Academy), was summoned before the Party and accused of condoning and abetting his "defeatism."

"Why did you listen without complaint to your husband's anti-Soviet fulminations?" asked the Party Organiser of the Faculty, Ivan Ivanovich Makhov.

"I never heard my husband say anything which could possibly be described as anti-Soviet," said the bewildered Zarkhina.

"You are defending an enemy of the people! You are shielding a saboteur!"

"No, I'm shielding nobody. If the Party has arrested my husband, he must be guilty beyond any doubt," she cried miserably.

"But had you no suspicions about his attitude?"

"None. I know, of course, that the Party can do no wrong. But I never had the slightest doubt of my husband's loyalty to the Soviet cause."

"What happened to your revolutionary vigilance, then? You should have denounced him long ago!" the questioner persisted.

"But I never heard any defeatist talk from him!" she screamed.

“ Why not? ”

So the futile inquisition proceeded.

Finally, the Party Organiser said, “ Comrades, members of the Bureau, Comrade Zarkhina shall speak. We insist that she shall confess her personal errors, and engage in severe self-criticism for her flagrant lapses from true revolutionary vigilance. We demand that, as a Party member, she shall never live with her husband again. If we members of the Party do not exercise continual watchfulness over our own husbands and wives, how, then, can we be trusted to watch other people? ”

Zarkhina said meekly, “ Comrades, I admit my guilt. I failed to show sufficient vigilance concerning my husband—my former husband, that is. I will never go back to him. I freely confess my grievous wrong in omitting to denounce him to the Party. I promise to increase my vigilance in future, and make up for the carelessness I have revealed.”

Zarkhina was by no means the only terrified wife to endure this experience. Thousands of Soviet women did so daily. Thousands more are similarly bullied into betraying their husbands today. Under Bolshevik rule, no man knows whether he can trust his wife; no woman knows if she can rely on her husband. And neither women nor men can be sure that their children will not report them to Party agents.

By the end of May, 1942, the Germans had occupied the Kerch peninsular. That summer, while our demagogues trumpeted praise for the “ unsurpassed boldness and brilliance ” of Stalin’s military direction. Hitler launched a further large-scale attack. Our troops abandoned Sevastopol on July 3rd.

The “ Gates of the Caucasus ” were occupied—Rostov-on-the-Don, Krasnodar, Stavropol and Novorossisk. By the autumn, the Germans were moving towards Stalingrad; they occupied Mikoyan-Shakhar, Teberda, Kislovodsk, Pyatigorsk, Malchik, Moxdok; they neared Dzaudzhikau (Vladikavkaz) and Grozny.

I do not think that Stalin ever committed as many follies as he did at that time. I was told that he had a small picture of Hitler placed on his desk, and plaintively asked

it, " Why do you knock me about? " He no longer talked to his subordinates; he yelled at them hysterically. He hurled himself from one violent mood to another. His renowned calmness and self-control burst like a bubble.

While the whole of our southern front collapsed, and communications became increasingly disrupted, his decisions grew more and more irresponsible. About the end of August, for instance, he issued a secret order that special regiments should be established behind our lines for the purpose of shooting retreating companies. Thus our soldiers, whose blood was already flowing in rivers, found themselves between two firing squads—in front were the guns of the former friends of the Politbureau, and behind were the guns of the Politbureau itself.

It can never be emphasised too strongly that, in finally routing the enemy, the decisive part was played by the peoples of the U.S.S.R., and not by Stalin. Certainly, a priceless asset was provided by Hitler's folly in permitting an incredibly widespread deployment of his forces across the enormous reaches of the country. And we were profoundly fortunate in some of our military leaders, who sprang into prominence from the ranks of the people's army during the war—Chuikov, Gurtiev, Rodimtsev, Rokossovsky, Zhukov, Vatutin and others. But, in our final triumph over the Nazi invaders, we had nothing for which to thank Stalin or his Marshals, Voroshilov, Timoshenko and Budyenni.

During the latter half of 1942, I again incurred an official reprimand for a " crime " against Party orthodoxy.

My native land—the Northern Caucasus—had been overrun by the Germans. My aged mother was there, somewhere behind the enemy's lines. Of the fate of my wife and daughter, who were also in the area, I knew nothing. It is easy to appreciate my anxiety concerning them. My own presence in a safe area, in the peaceful depths of the country, seemed to me as dishonourable as it was futile. Accordingly, I begged for a transfer to the North Caucasian front, stressing how obviously useful my knowledge of the local languages, history and customs would be.

The answer to my application curtly stated that, if ever I were sent to the front, it would be to the Karelian and



certainly not the North Caucasian area. Further, it insisted, my plea for a posting to my own homeland strongly indicated that I was in a "nationalistic frame of mind," and that I was inwardly "tainted with defeatism."

This, of course, was in keeping with the general plan of posting soldiers who belonged to non-Russian minority nations as far as possible from their native lands. At heart, the Dictators in the Kremlin were far less frightened of the Germans than they were of the local populations in Lithuania, Belorussia, the Ukraine, the Crimea, the Cossack Provinces and the Caucasus. They feared, above all, that any soldiers from these areas ordered to their home territories would support some kind of rapprochement between their peoples and the Germans.

I have always believed in friendship among the separate peoples of Russia, but I shall never become reconciled to the crass edict of the Kremlin that Ukrainians, Georgians, Belorussians, Armenians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Esthonians, North Caucasians, Tartars, Karelians and Turkestanis should love their native lands with less fervour than they evince for Russia. It would hardly be reasonable to ask the Scots to love their native Scotland less than, say, the Cameroons. It is mad to expect an Esthonian to love Kamchatka as much as Esthonia; absurd to insist that a Georgian should love Sakhalin as much as his own lovely region. But that is precisely what they are trying to do in the U.S.S.R.

When my application to go and fight on the North Caucasian front was rejected, I felt profoundly indignant. In a stormy interview with the Chief of the evacuated Academy I demanded that the fatuous prejudice which prevented a man from aiding the defence of his own native land should be abandoned in the present dark hour of the U.S.S.R.'s peril. Such a ban, I declared, did not curb national passions; it merely excited them. The Party, I reminded him, had proclaimed equal rights for all nations in everything, and not more equality of subservience beneath the red flag.

Obviously, I was asking for trouble. Once again, I was called before the Party; once more I was reprimanded. The charge was "nationalism"—the very sin of which the Kremlin was guilty in its treatment of the minority

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peoples. For long, however, it had been the technique of the Government to transfer its own guilt to innocent shoulders, and to accuse the nearest scapegoats to hand of exactly the crimes of which it was most culpable.

As things turned out, the verdict against me was not confirmed by higher authority.

By the autumn of 1942 it was apparent that the star of Hitler's fortune was on the wane. The German advance on the over-expanded Russian front had faltered and died. In North Africa, Rommel's forces met with a heavy defeat by the British 8th Army at El Alamein.

Nevertheless, Hitler insanely determined to storm the walls of Stalingrad. Had he been anything but a military idiot, who mistakenly supposed himself to be a Napoleon, he would have concentrated his front, withdrawn his forces from secondary displacements, regrouped them, and exploited, at least, such advantages as his unhappy situation had to offer. Instead, he did everything he could to ensure that his army should perish at Stalingrad. Well do I remember those days. I was attached to the 222 Long-Range Aviation Division, and our main job was to bombard Hitler's troops massed before the city.

So far, the German troops had gone from victory to victory; now the balance had shifted, and we held the initiative. The future still contained plenty of "blood, sweat and tears" for us; our opponents were by no means exhausted. But we knew that victory for Russia was now a certainty.

The Kremlin's reaction to the turn in the war's tide was typical. Once again, "world revolution" became the intrinsic aim. And the first and most essential step was to restore the people's visibly shaken confidence in the Party leaders. A statement was issued (and later repeated over and over again, in order to imprint it indelibly on the national consciousness) to the effect that the Germans had been halted solely as a consequence of the internal solidarity of the Soviet regime.

There was not a corner in the U.S.S.R.—no collective farm, factory, workshop, concentration camp, prison, not even a maternity home—in which this message was not

drummed into the dazed heads of the occupants. Everywhere, the same witless phrases were chanted . . . " Thanks to the great Stalin's wisdom and guidance " . . . " due to the magnificent strategy of the Political Bureau " . . . " as a result of Comrade Stalin's farseeing generalship " . . . In short, the Politbureau had halted the Germans, routed their armies, and were now advancing to victory on all fronts.

Oddly enough, the Red Army provided fertile soil for the dissemination of these fables. The reason was simply that the veterans who had endured months of disordered retreat as a result of the bungling of their superiors, and who knew the full tragedy of the Kremlin's direction at first hand, through bloody experience, were either dead or nursing their wounds in remote areas. By the time the pendulum changed its direction, and the Red Army started its mass advance, the composition of its ranks was practically new. And these young soldiers, advancing on a tide of conquest against a dispirited foe, were fair game for the falsehoods of the propaganda machine.

The reasoning powers of the mass of the people, too, had been brutalised by the chaos and destruction of the war; mental and spiritual life had been narrowed into a simple desire to kill. Thus, when victory began to appear a certainty, the people were left empty and lost, not knowing, as it were, what to feel next. Propaganda proceeded to fill the vacuum. Popular outlook changed to such an extent that men who, only a few months before, had been threatening Stalin with dire, if entirely impracticable, retribution, went to the front singing, " Into battle for the Fatherland! Into battle for Stalin! "

Later, when I was posted abroad, I met many people who were profoundly convinced that the U.S.S.R. had beaten the Germans because of Stalin; they could not believe that our victory had been won despite him. They assured me that the very self-sacrifice of the peoples of Russia proved how well-loved their leaders, Stalin and Molotov, must be. One Allied officer, speaking of Russia, assured me that " Despots exist only where people are willing to be slaves."

Such reasoning—purveyed now, as then, by hundreds of " experts on the U.S.S.R."—reveals nothing more than

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ignorance of the true Russian soul. Anybody who gains his knowledge of the U.S.S.R. through the Press and radio—above all, through the Soviet Press and radio—can never hope to understand the country's spiritual essence. To do that, one must have lived among the Russian peoples, shared their hardships, seen into their simple minds.

Liberty may have perished in Russia, but notably few of the people joined in its murder. The Russians do not favour despotism; they endure it. And their cry to the West is, "Be warned by our tragedy! See, before it is too late, where such marionettes of Moscow as Thorez, Pollitt, Togliatti and the rest are trying to lead you! Learn, and do not repeat our mistake!"

Few things are more illogical than the parrot conclusion, "The Russian people fought for Stalin; therefore they love despotism." The Russian people fought neither for Stalin nor despotism. They fought for Russia. Suvorov's army was made up of serfs, yet it was no less determined and powerful than the army of Napoleon which it faced. Did that mean that the serfs enjoyed their serfdom? The army commanded by Kutuzov, which, in 1812, annihilated Napoleon's forces, also largely consisted of slaves. Does the fact that they fought so well indicate that they relished their slavery?

Most people in the U.S.S.R. who took part in the second world war, far from fighting for Stalin and the Politbureau, were hazily convinced that, once Hitler's invading hordes had been driven out of the country, some kind of new spirit would animate the Kremlin. The belief gained credence through the deep desire which inspired it. And Stalin and Molotov, with an eye to their own precarious position at the time, did all they could to encourage such placid illusions. They resorted to all manner of tricks to foster the notion that "things were going to be different after the war."

They began by recalling the ghosts of national heroes: "Let your inspiration in this war spring from the noble example of your great ancestors—Aleksandre Nevsky, Dmitry Donskoi, Kuzma Minin, Dmitri Pozharski, Aleksandre Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov!", exhorted Stalin as early as November, 1941, in the Red Square, Moscow. (Before the invasion, Bolshevik propaganda had depicted

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those same noble representatives of Russia's past as evil tyrants; vampires who prospered by drinking the people's blood.)

Among the non-Russian peoples, this appeal produced little response, but the Russian races found it both invigorating and reassuring. Old traditions persisted; old freedoms would come again!

Another step in the same campaign was the restoration of the former Russian officers' uniform, with gold or silver epaulets. These same epaulets, at the time of the 1917 rising, had been denounced as "counter-revolutionary gee-gaws" and "bourgeois baubles." Worse than that, they had been hacked from officers' shoulders with the living flesh they covered. Now they adorned not only the shoulders of all Red Army officers, but even those of the Father of Peoples himself. "Therefore," many people reasoned, "the rulers intend to temper their dictatorship." And that was precisely what they were meant to think.

Soon after Hitler had first routed the Soviet troops, a further move was made in the same direction. Commissars were abolished in the Red Army. This step was applauded everywhere, for Commissars had long been recognised as the very personification of despotism in the Armed Forces. At that time, nobody realised that the process was, in fact, an exact repetition of that which had been applied when the loathsome CHEKA was liquidated and almost instantly replaced by the OGPU. All that happened was that Red Army Commissars were superseded by "Deputies of the Political Section," with exactly similar functions and parallel methods. Only the label was changed.

The object of persuading the people that the Kremlin was relaxing its grip was furthered by an edict of the Politbureau in 1943 which sanctioned freedom of religion in the U.S.S.R., the restoration of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church, and election of a Patriarch. Then came an even more sensational step—the dissolution of the Comintern.

Such manœuvres could not deceive people who knew, from bitter experience, the true cynicism and falsity of the Kremlin oligarchs. Such people did all that was possible to prevent the smoke of propaganda clouding the eyes of the population. But not much was possible. Men and women who risked sharing critical ideas with each other,

and tried desperately to find some means of passing the truth on to others, faced instant imprisonment.

One significant aspect of popular reaction during the war years was that Stalin ceased to exist in people's minds as a distinct entity. He was regarded merely as a member of the victorious triumvirate—Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. We were fully convinced of the excellence of that fighting partnership, and would never have thought of attacking one of its members; a blow at one would have been a blow at them all. But we fondly imagined, also, that, when the war was over, the triumvirate would remain closely linked, and that none of its partners would dare to enforce any kind of despotic rule.

We assured ourselves that the great, free nations whose blood had flowed with Russia's in stemming the scourge of Nazism simply would not tolerate any recrudescence of open dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. We even deceived ourselves into believing that the Teheran and Yalta conferences could never have taken place if Stalin had not promised Churchill and Roosevelt to mend his totalitarian ways after the war! Everybody in Russia was consumed with the hope that things were going to take a turn for the better. How naive we were! Few people in the Western democracies realised then, or can realise now, how great was our faith in them. It cannot be denied that we were mistaken in our belief that Stalin would suffer a change of heart—but it is equally undeniable that our Allies did not fulfil the high expectations we reposed in them.

Immediately the Politbureau became satisfied that all danger of an internal rising had passed, it began to restore the old order. Stalin was glorified to the pitch of insanity as the country's saviour. And, early in 1944, anti-British and anti-American symptoms began to evince themselves again at Party meetings, not attended by the general public. For a long time, any such sentiments had been banned from the Soviet Press as "inauspicious"; now *Trud* and *New Time* came out with a rash of jeers at "imperialism" and "capitalism," the "treacherous social democrats," and the "mercenary policy" of Britain and America.

The Comintern had been dissolved, to the joy of the people, but now the sinister All-Slav Committee was

operating at full blast in Kropotkin Street, Moscow. (It was this Committee which first conspired to create the Cominform). "We've been swindled!" was the common public reaction. To which, someone or other always answered, "Roosevelt and Churchill won't allow it!" But Roosevelt and Churchill did.

The dirge of the Internationale had been officially abrogated, which pleased people immensely. But now a new anthem was popularised, with words which bristled with arrant imperialism. "Union, irrevocable, of free republics," gloated the opening couplet, "great Russia has consolidated for ever!"

So it seemed that the Kremlin considered our country a Union. But what, after all, what, is a Union? If words mean anything, it is an equal partnership; a free association. And it must clearly embrace the absolute right of each of its members to secede from the federation if he so wishes. But any child could tell you that the "Union Republics" and "Autonomous" Provinces of Russia did not join the U.S.S.R. voluntarily. They became "united" by weight of arms, by war and coercion.

Much secret indignation, too, was aroused by the use of the word "Republics" in this chauvinist ditty. We knew very well what Republics were, and we knew that they did not exist in the U.S.S.R. "Long live . . . the Soviet Union!" cried the anthem. Long live, in other words, reactionary dictatorship! We had always considered Lenin to be the progenitor of our miseries, while his successor has increased them a thousandfold. But the new anthem exalted them both to the skies. It was not a popular song.

Here is the text:—

Union, irrevocable, of free republics  
Great Russia has consolidated for ever.  
Long live, by the will of the people created,  
The indivisible and mighty Soviet Union!  
Fame to our free Fatherland—  
Of friendship of peoples the eternal support.  
Soviet Banner, National Banner,  
Lead us on from victory to victory!  
In dreams the sun of freedom shone for us.  
Then Lenin the great road for us illumined.

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We have been upraised by Stalin—for faith in the  
people,  
For labour and for great deeds he has inspired us.  
Fame to our free Fatherland, etc.  
We have trained our armies for strife;  
Usurpers vile we shall sweep from the road!  
In battle we shall decide the fate of generations;  
We shall lead our Fatherland to fame!  
Fame to our free Fatherland, etc. . . .

This hymn to totalitarianism was first sung over the radio on New Year's Eve, 1943. Six of us, all officers and Party members, listened to it in the flat of one Colonel Ishchenko. "That thing symbolises the restoration of pre-war despotism," I said. "If renewed lack of freedom is all that we've fought for, Stalin has cheated us right and left." At once I became involved in a serious quarrel. But I was right.

Few things astonished the People of Russia more, in the course of the war, than the Red Army's blatant betrayal of the resistance movement in Warsaw in the autumn of 1944. Our troops were then deployed in the eastern part of the city, on the right bank of the Vistula. They sun-bathed, while, across the river, Polish patriots, led by General Bor-komarovsky, fought a desperate battle against the Germans. They did not move a finger to help their Allies.

What did this mean? Why did our forces not rush to the aid of the Poles in their heroic fight against the common foe? We just did not know. But we could not blind our eyes to the fact that the war against Hitler was ostensibly directed by the Roosevelt-Churchill-Stalin triumvirate, and, presumably, every strategic decision made by Stalin was enforced with the knowledge and agreement of his two great coadjutors. But what sort of villain's agreement was it which allowed the brave fighters of Warsaw to be massacred by the Nazis while Russian soldiers stood by and let them die?

At the time, we could find no satisfactory answer to this tormenting question. But, later, it became evident that the Warsaw betrayal was due to Stalin alone. The truth was that he desired a German victory there because he knew such men would offer fierce opposition to his own subse-



quent attempt to enslave their proud country. He was only too pleased that Hitler should save him the trouble of killing them.

What was the basic attitude of Stalin and Molotov towards the U.S.S.R.'s great Allies in the second world war—Great Britain and the United States of America?

First, it should be emphasised that Stalin was never a really honest partner to Churchill and Roosevelt. He was a new kind of colleague—one with a stiletto hidden up his sleeve, and a mind alert to discern the moment when it would be safe to stab his Western confrères in the back. Never for a moment did he renounce his ambitious dream of creating a World Soviet Union. He wanted war, because he considered it would advance this project, and his constant hope was that the main combatants would exhaust themselves and each other without involving the U.S.S.R. to any extent which might be termed dangerous.

No better proofs that Stalin wished above all for a war of attrition between the major European powers could be provided than various statements made to me, or in my presence, by officials in close personal touch with the leader. In the U.S.S.R., no prominent representative of the Party can—or indeed dare—speak on any question of higher policy without repeating the precise views of the Father of Peoples.

The process of circulating approved patterns of thought is invariable. First, Stalin himself pronounces them to the Politbureau. Then they are passed, as expressions of incontrovertible wisdom, to the Central Committee of the Party, from whence they are relayed to the Secretaries of the Republics and the Party Provincial Committees. Eventually, they are disseminated at Party or Trade Union meetings, and every care is taken to ensure that they shall not become in any way distorted during their involved process of transmission from the Kremlin to the village hall. Thus, any Party leader expressing an opinion on current events is, to all intents and purposes, repeating Stalin's personal observations.

I have already mentioned, as an example of this procedure, a speech made by Colonel General Shchadenko, Deputy People's Commissar of Defence and a close friend

of Stalin, in the summer of 1938. He repeatedly emphasised the belief that a war between Germany and the Western "plutocracies" was quite inevitable. "Let them knock each other's teeth out!" he said. "Meanwhile, we will strengthen our defences, waiting like a huntsman with a loaded gun while two wolves tear each other to pieces before his eyes. Why should we attempt to stop the wolves destroying each other? Let us, rather, assist them in this worthy project as much as we can."

Shchadenko's bloodthirsty sentiments were repeated by many other high-ranking Party executives. I recall, for instance, a speech on the international situation delivered at the Academy in the autumn of 1939 by a Central Committee lecturer named Georgiev.

Georgiev was at pains to underline the fact that the Maginot and Siegfried Lines were of high significance to the Soviet Union, for they enclosed between them the area in which the British, French and German armies would proceed to destroy each other, emerging irreparably weakened. "And what then?" he asked. "Then we shall put all three of them in strait jackets!" The customary storm of applause greeted this glib prophecy.

Then there was a three-hour survey of the world situation given at a secret meeting in the Academy by Troyanovsky, who had been Soviet Ambassador to Japan and the U.S.A. and was later appointed Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. He was one of the older and more experienced Party diplomats, and knew, if any man did, what particular line was being taken by the Kremlin at that juncture. And his speech was concerned with one theme alone—that the U.S.S.R. should coerce Britain and France into fighting Germany to the death, and, simultaneously, coerce Germany into fighting Britain and France to the death. It was perhaps, the most cynical address I ever heard delivered, even in the Soviet Union.

Of similar calibre was a lecture given to the Officer Corps of the Moscow Garrison by Major General Voloshin. Standing in front of enormous maps of the Western Front, he hotly condemned "the Remarque spirit" which, he declared, animated the Allied and German armies at that period. Voloshin irritably pointed out that the present combatants were inflicting no losses upon each other, and

that the "phoney war" was entirely failing to meet Soviet expectations. Nevertheless, he reminded his audience, the Siegfried and Maginot lines were "important potential sources of proletarian revolution," and the conflict—once it started in earnest—"might yet undermine that bulwark of capitalist reaction, Great Britain."

Several significant observations, too, were made to me by my friend, the high Party official. He made no bones of the fact that the U.S.S.R. was, to all intents and purposes, an ally of Nazi Germany, and was zealously supplying Hitler with petrol. (This petrol later powered the Panzer Divisions in their advance across France.) He considered this to be an excellent tactic. "Sooner or later," he reasoned, "America will come into the war on the side of Britain and France. Unless we aid Hitler by sending him fuel and other necessities, there is every reason to suppose that, in the face of this formidable alliance, he will crack up—*before* the German home front is irreparably exhausted. Such a state of affairs would be most dangerous. Germany's industrial potential would remain unimpaired, and the British, French and American armies would still be full of fight. That is why we must give Hitler every assistance in our power to prolong the war for as long as possible, and free him from his well-known dread of having to fight on two fronts. By this means, we shall ensure that the Allies and Germany will at length destroy each other, and leave their weakened peoples at our disposal. The greater the number of British, French, American and German soldiers who kill each other now, the less there will be for us to have to shoot later!"

Hitler's attack on the U.S.S.R., when it came, did not alter in any way the basic policy of the Politbureau. Mutual destruction by the Western protagonists continued to be the longed-for objective. And one of the principal means adopted to speed its achievement was the campaign launched to hustle Britain and America into opening a second front against the Germans.

This propagandist onslaught reached a pitch of hysteria. In every corner of the free world, Communists and their fellow-travellers were instructed to demand a second front as noisily and theatrically as they could. Armchair strate-

gists, bemused by the Kremlin's outpourings, joined their voices to the concerted howl. Paid hacks deluged the Press with articles and letters, using every manner of argument to prove how right Stalin and Molotov were in their inspired insistence that a second front must be opened without another second's delay.

In the summer of 1943, even the newly created Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Aleksis, saw fit to demand the opening of a second front "in the name of the Christian religion," though he must have been very well aware that Stalin and Molotov desired this extension of the war only in order to ensure that as many Western Christians as possible should perish.

The aim of weakening both the Allied and German armies was, in fact, the only true purpose which underlay the Kremlin's clamour for an invasion of Europe. Had Stalin genuinely felt that the pressure of Hitler's forces on the Russian front was so intense that the opening of a further front offered the only solution for victory, he would, it seems to me, have accepted Winston Churchill's plan for the landing of Allied forces on the Balkan coast, quite unconditionally. And indeed, this attack, had it ever been staged, could only have reflected in the most favourable way on the Soviet campaign. To counter it, Hitler would have been bound to move large forces from the Russian front. An Allied invasion of northern France, on the other hand, could hardly have brought such swift succour to the Red Army. The beaches of France, unlike the Balkan coast, were heavily fortified, and could well have been defended for a considerable period without any German reinforcements being brought from the East.

But what, in fact, was Stalin's reaction to Churchill's Balkan plan? Before me on my desk, as I write, is a document bearing these words: "*The suggested Balkan experiment is judged to be unacceptable by Glavkoverkh.*" ("Glavkoverkh" was the abbreviation used during the war for "Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces"—a post occupied, as is well known, by Stalin himself.)

Another document in my possession refers to the fact that "*Glavkoverkh considers the Anglo-American forces*

*should attempt to land on the north coast of France and nowhere else."*

Had Churchill's plan been carried out, the position in the "people's democracies" of Eastern Europe today would be very decisively different from what it is. And the fear of war, with which Stalin has infected the whole world, would be far less prevalent.

As soon as the danger of a Balkan invasion had been removed, Kremlin policy pursued two main objectives—first to coerce the British and Americans into launching an invasion across the English Channel before they were fully prepared to accomplish it (thus ensuring calamitous losses for them) and, secondly, to make perfectly sure that the Russian forces should reach the key-centres of Europe before the Allies.

In furtherance of the second aim, elaborate plans were drawn up for Russian aircraft eventually to be based not only on airfields in Berlin and Vienna but also in Hamburg, the Ruhr, Bavaria and the Saar. Similarly, the "Free German" Committee, organised in Moscow and headed by Wilhelm Pieck—now President of the so-called "German Democratic Republic"—included servile puppets from all these localities.

As to the first objective, the Politbureau were firmly convinced that the Germans were firmly entrenched throughout France, that any attempt at an Allied landing must consequently result in desperately serious losses on either side, and that any invasion must produce a prolonged and exhausting battle. Even if the Allies succeeded in breaching the coast, our military experts considered, the German-manned Maginot and Siegfried Lines, to say nothing of the Rhine, must inevitably slow their progress and ensure eventual prostration. By that time the Germans would have had to withdraw the bulk of their forces from the Eastern to the Western front, thus leaving the way clear for a decisive advance by the Russians throughout Germany.

Only one fact marred these plans—the invasion was a success. Stalin was furious. Masking his real feelings, he sent a telegram to the Anglo-American command acclaiming the Normandy triumph, and the Soviet Press duly published the text. Even Antonov, Chief of the General

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Staff, referred to this message as a symbol of "official hypocrisy."

Then came the ruthless bombardment of Britain with V-1 and V-2 rockets, while a heavy tank battle developed around Caen. In the Academy, every room contained a map of the Western front. The Department of Central Tactics issued a daily bulletin, recording the progress of the struggle—a service which had not previously been provided, even in the days of Moscow's mortal danger. Fanatical Party members followed the heroic story of the fighting in France in every detail; their disappointment increased with the Allied gains. They consoled themselves with the tacit belief that the flying bombs would at least put paid to the "bastion of capitalist reaction," the "accursed island," Great Britain.

But Great Britain took the flying bombs as it had taken the rest of the war's hardships, and the invasion armies swept forward to the Rhine. The baffled Politbureau could do nothing. The Red Army proved quite incapable of making a drive of equal magnitude from the East. Its forces were neither prepared nor trained for such an operation; they were tired out from months of ceaseless fighting, and the Germans, contrary to all expectations, had not at that time withdrawn any appreciable number of troops from the Russian front to stem the advance of Eisenhower's men.

When the Allied armies stopped at the Rhine, a sigh of relief went around Moscow. Then was the moment, while Hitler was obsessed with planning a counter-offensive, for the Soviet forces to launch some kind of an onslaught from the East. But Stalin made no move. His great hope, as his son, Vasili, expressed it, was that the Germans would yet inflict "panic-producing blows" on the Allied armies, following which Russian troops would "leap into Europe."

But Hitler's counter-attack in the Ardennes failed, and there was every danger that any leaping necessary would, in fact, be performed by the Allied armies. Suddenly the word was given that Soviet forces must, at all costs, race the Allies to Berlin; they must seize every inch of Germany they could; they must penetrate, if not to the Rhine, at least to Schleswig-Holstein.

Marshal Zhukov was personally empowered and instructed by Stalin to press on towards the German capital

regardless of any human sacrifice which might be involved. When one division had been annihilated, another was thrown into battle; when that had perished, a third was there to replace it. A million Red Army men lost their lives in the ghastly advance. When Headquarters told the Kremlin of this fantastic butchery, the reply was brief—*“Berlin must be taken at all costs.”*

The only aim of this wild campaign was to reach the city before—or, at worst, simultaneously with—the Allied armies. But the trouble was, from Stalin’s point of view, that the Allies were now approaching Berlin at racing speed. The closer their victory over Germany became, the more frightened was Moscow. Finally, the Red Army achieved full occupation of northern Germany, as far as the River Weser. The immediate goal then was to percolate into Schleswig-Holstein, into Kiel, into Copenhagen and Malmo, so that Stalin might seal the gates of the Baltic and settle the fate of the Scandinavian countries. But General Montgomery out-distanced Marshal Rokossovsky, then in command of the Soviet northern group, and these plans came to naught.

The war ended very differently from the way desired by Stalin. Their most stupendous efforts had failed to flood Western Europe with Red Army forces. True, half their basic desire had been fulfilled—Germany had been bled near to death through Hitler’s frenzied resistance to the last ditch. But Great Britain and, more particularly, the United States of America were far from exhausted. As far as military might was concerned, they were at the very height of their powers at the end of the war. Nothing had stopped their swift progress through Germany, and Stalin’s dream of occupying the whole country had, perforce, to be abandoned. Bad loser as he was, he was compelled to put a good face on things, and agree to joint occupation by the four Powers.

But this did not mean that he had renounced his fundamental political aims in the slightest degree. On the contrary, he was determined to pursue them with redoubled energy. If war could not produce their realisation, maybe peace could! At once the Kremlin must set about regaining the ground it had lost.

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The basic objective remained the same—to “Sovietise” the whole of Europe and bring it beneath the totalitarian yoke of the Politbureau. Every form of manoeuvre and intrigue must be utilised to this end. So Stalin set out on a course of open aggression within the elastic frame work of the “cold war.” The first victims earmarked in the West were Poland, Roumania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia, Greece, France, Italy and Finland; in the East, China and Korea. When the Communists had completed their treacherous conquest of these nations, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland and possibly Spain and Portugal would tumble into the Kremlin’s lap like over-ripe plums.

He turned to his new “cold war” tactics as soon as it became transparently certain that Western Germany would be occupied by the Allies. His aim was to exploit, without a single moment’s delay, the misery and chaos the war had left throughout occupied Europe—not only to exploit it, but, if possible, to increase it. Poverty and ruin were the finest allies the Communists could possess; rehabilitation in any shape was an obstacle in the path of “world revolution.”

I had the opportunity of observing the practical application of this policy at first hand, in one of the principal theatres in which it was carried out—Germany. For two and a half years I worked there as a member of the Central Staff, whose direct task it was to implement the campaign in every particular. I know the minutest details of the conspiracy. Its external effects are only too wretchedly familiar to the harassed world, but knowledge of the inside story is needed if a true picture of the Kremlin’s method is to be obtained. Soviet policy in Germany presents a microcosm of Stalin’s plan for world conquest through the enslavement of all free peoples beneath the red flag.



## PART II

### *MY ORDERS FROM STALIN*

#### CHAPTER I

##### I am sent to Berlin

THERE is no need for me to describe the circumstances surrounding my posting to Germany. I will only say that I had no personal hand in arranging it. The first intimation I had that I might be moved abroad came to me in a conversation with my friend, an important Party official. He asked me if the prospect of work outside Russia appealed to me, and I told him quite frankly that, although I should have no objection to living in a foreign country, I was by no means certain that I should agree with the policy to be followed there.

In June, 1945, I duly received instructions to report to the Berlin headquarters of Marshal Zhukov, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian occupation forces and Chief of Staff of the newly created Soviet Military Administration. I was told particularly to visit all the strategic centres possible, to mix with as many Germans and Russians as I could, and to be present at all important meetings—in short, to keep abreast, in every way, with the tide of events. Thus, I was in an admirable position to learn the basic facts behind various Soviet manoeuvres—facts which were never, by any chance, published in the Press.

My first job was to accompany the Soviet Delegation to the Potsdam Conference, as an advisory expert on aviation questions. As things turned out, however, my services were not called upon, and, for the period of the Conference, I had practically nothing to do.

A few days after it ended, I was appointed First Soviet Secretary to the Allied Control Council in Berlin. I started work in the Chief of Staff's residence, the historic Berlin-Karlshorst mansion, where Keitel had signed Germany's

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declaration of unconditional surrender. Already the house was known as the "Berlin Kremlin." It was permanently and heavily guarded by patrols from a special Security Battalion, and direct lines linked it with the genuine Kremlin, the private offices of the Soviet Provincial Representatives in Germany and the headquarters of the various Red Army Commanders.

There were two floors. Marshal Zhukov and his Deputy, Marshal Sokolovsky (now Deputy Minister of Armed Forces in the U.S.S.R.) occupied the ground level, and the rooms upstairs were assigned to myself and the Head of Zhukov's Secretariat.

The C-in-C's immediate executive organ was the Staff of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (known as SVAG). This had much in common with a Council of Ministers, and was headed by Colonel General Kurasov, who was later to become Chief of Staff of the Russian Military Administration in Austria. SVAG was composed of an appalling number of officials, many of them Generals, with a controlling hand in every department.

In Russia, I had never been fool enough to believe the official fables that people in "capitalist" and, especially, "Fascist" countries were immeasurably worse off than the inhabitants of the U.S.S.R., nor that their "misery and poverty" contrasted bleakly with the "happiness and prosperity" of Soviet citizens. My friends and I knew that such stories were nonsense. Nevertheless, my first sight of Berlin affected me greatly. I had never, for a moment, imagined that general conditions for workers under Hitler were as infinitely superior as they were to those endured by workers under Stalin. The average German working-class home was a palace compared with the hovel provided for a Soviet labourer, and was graced by luxuries, such as a radio, which, in Russia, could have been afforded only by a Party boss or a Stakhanovite.

But what impressed me even more than the difference in the scale of living attained by the two peoples was the attitude of German workers towards the Russians—the men who, at least according to Soviet propaganda, had "liberated" them from bondage under Nazism. Certainly, I had heard of the outrages perpetrated by Red Army troops against the inhabitants—particularly the women—

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of every German village or town they had entered. But I never could have credited the bitter loathing the Germans had for everything Russian if I had not directly encountered it in Berlin.

Once, when my chauffeur was unable to find the headquarters of the Soviet Commandant in a town in Thuringia, we drove up and down aimlessly, hoping to locate the building by some notice outside it. Both being in Russian uniform, we knew perfectly well that it was useless to ask anyone the way. Had we stopped the car, every passer-by would have run for his life.

It is only fair, unpleasant though it may be, to say that the reputation our troops had incurred had been eminently justified by their conduct.

I could, indeed, fill a book with authentic details of the barbarities inflicted upon helpless German civilians by the Soviet conquerors. Robbery, rape and murder took place on a monstrous scale. But, although these crimes were actually committed by peasants, workers and even members of the intelligentsia, the true liability for them lay, in my opinion, with the Kremlin. Ehrenburg, the roaring mouthpiece of the Politbureau, and his co-propagandists had so depraved the minds and dulled the moral sense of these war-time conscripts that they could hardly be judged accountable for their actions. Commanding officers, too, were so bemused by the torrent of Soviet propaganda urging mass hatred of the Germans that they made little effort to curb their men's brutal excesses. Frequently they themselves set the standard of bestiality. The all-round attitude in the Army, in fact, was that the sufferings undergone by Soviet citizens in German-occupied territories should be revenged ten-fold now that the jack-boot was on the other foot.

In view of all this, it may seem curious that SVAG's main purpose was to make the German people "love" the Soviet Union and the power it represented. But the principle of first frightening your subject to death and then working on him with propaganda until he is your pliant slave was not uncommon in the U.S.S.R., and there was every reason to suppose that it might prove effective in Germany. SVAG therefore deluged the Soviet Zone with a flood of newspaper articles, radio talks and public speeches

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glorifying Communism and Stalin. The NKVD were ready to deal with anyone who did not react with sufficient enthusiasm to this stream of persuasion, and swiftly the people began to reveal their "love," at least to the extent of prudently refraining from open expressions of discontent.

Chief of Propaganda and Agitation in SVAG was Colonel Tyulpanov, who had unlimited resources, in money and equipment, at his disposal. Among other things, he installed a "House of Soviet Culture" in the Unter den Linden, and formed a "Society for Soviet-German Friendship." The influence of his department extended into every town and village in the zone. From hour to hour and from minute to minute the hammer of propaganda beat on the minds of the war-ravaged population.

Among the shrewdest means adopted of making the Germans "love" the Soviet Union was the close control of food supplies maintained by the Russian authorities. No family in the Soviet Zone could have existed for more than a fortnight had its members attempted to oppose any measure imposed by SVAG. And, naturally, known and professed Communists lived better than any other people. Never in history have bread and potatoes exerted such profound political pressure as they did in the Soviet Zone of Germany in 1945.

But, despite the three-fold campaign of intimidation, feverish propaganda and material blackmail, the Germans secretly continued to loathe the Soviet Union.

The main aim of the Politbureau being the "sovietisation" of the whole of Germany, much play was made with propaganda stressing the essential need for unity throughout the country. At the end of 1946, Molotov himself visited Berlin and held a conference with the leading lights of SVAG. He then declared that popular desire for a united Germany was the trump card in the Soviet hand, and that, if played rightly, it would meet with an overwhelming response in all four zones. Nothing could be of greater help to SVAG in its task than the nationalistic spirit inherent in the German people, he urged, and this should be encouraged by all possible means if we did not wish "to hand Germany to the Western imperialists." He appeared, indeed, to be quite convinced that SVAG had only to

declare itself in favour of "one Germany" and the Germans would applaud and obey all Soviet dictates, at the same time upholding Russia in all its quarrels with the Western Allies.

It was, of course, essential to put a gloss of democracy on the proceedings by the creation of some political organisation ostensibly inspired and directed by the Germans themselves. The German Communist Party was obviously suspect, and, furthermore, it enjoyed little influence among the masses. Thus, the German Socialist Unity Party (SED) came into existence, with the notion of uniting the working class throughout the four zones. This was, in effect, a merging of the Social Democratic and Communist Parties, and the prime purpose behind the manoeuvre was the practical obliteration of the Social Democrats.

It was intended from the start that the Communists should hold all key posts in the new Party, and that the Social Democrats should be coerced, by one means or another, into supporting whatever policies they laid down. At the very least, it was hoped that the Social Democrats would be so weakened by rifts in their ranks, when confronted with the formation of a "Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands," that they would cease to possess any integral significance.

But things began to go wrong for SVAG from the very beginning. First, only a limited number of Social Democrats agreed to accept union with the Communists. Despite this disappointment, however, and entirely misjudging the strength of those who remained true to their code, SVAG launched a general election for Berlin's City Council in the autumn of 1946.

Every conceivable measure was taken to ensure that the new Party should win the poll by a "landslide" majority. Whole districts of the capital were bedaubed with posters assuring the electorate that they had only to register a vote for the SED candidates to ensure future joy and plenty for themselves and all their neighbours. The only "authentically democratic" Party, brayed the Soviet propagandists, was the SED; all others were base manipulators of the people's will.

Socialist Unity candidates, backed by SVAG, had greater funds at their disposal than those of any other

Party. They had, indeed, every advantage save the essential one of popular support. Their most dangerous rivals—those Social Democrats who had refused to merge with the Communists—were hindered in their campaign by every obstacle which the wit of the SVAG authorities could contrive. And, just before polling day, a special bonus of potatoes was given to every voter. "These vegetables will win the day for SED!" Colonel Tyulpanov solemnly gloated at a secret meeting I attended.

But the influence of the potatoes was not as great as he had surmised. Following the election, the stunned SVAG was compelled to admit the SED had polled only 19.8 per cent of the total votes, while the despised Social Democrats had received 48.7 per cent. These scandalous figures shook the Kremlin to its rotten core. Here was concrete proof that the Germans neither "loved," admired nor even feared the Soviet Union, but, on the contrary, detested its existence. "Sovietisation" of the whole country was going to be a much more complex job than had been supposed.

Forthwith, a special Commission arrived from Moscow to inquire into the causes of the catastrophe. The editor of the daily paper issued by SVAG received a reprimand, and Tyulpanov himself was told that his propaganda machine must be reorganised in every particular to make certain that nothing like this disgraceful fiasco should ever occur again.

But, as though to rub in the failure of the election, reports began to come in from the members of SVAG's secret service that SED was meeting with little success in the country as a whole, and that the clamour for a united Germany had failed to produce any kind of substantial response. SVAG thereupon reached the conclusion that one of the chief obstacles to successful sovietisation was the presence of the Western Allies in the capital, and that every step should be taken to eject them from Berlin as swiftly as possible.

Why was it that the Germans so decisively rejected the SED candidates in the Berlin City Council election? First, because the new Party extolled the Soviet occupation authorities in a manner which most Germans found fulsome and sickening; secondly, because its leader, Pieck and his lieutenants were obvious, cringing servants of the Politbureau. No measures of bribery or blackmail could overcome these essential objections. And, once the results had

been declared, SED's stock began to fall calamitously even in the eyes of its own adherents. I remember a University Professor speaking to me on three occasions about Otto Grotewohl, leader of that section of the Social Democratic Party which aligned itself with the Communists. His comments were typical of public feeling, both in and outside the SED ranks. In April, 1946, he cautiously declared that Grotewohl was "not, perhaps, a very perspicacious democrat." In December of the same year, he said that the former SPD leader was "merely a dupe of Pieck's" while, in August, 1947, he described him, in the roundest terms, as "a villainous traitor and Quisling!"

It only remains to be said that the Berlin Council elected by the people of the Soviet Zone was never permitted to operate in any freedom by SVAG. The Oberburgermeister, Professor Reuter, was never allowed to operate at all! The world knows now of the struggle waged by the Council members against the terrorist dictatorship of the Soviet occupation authorities; a struggle as courageous as it was unavailing.

One of the basic reasons for the failure of the SED to attract popular support, and for the Germans' continued rooted antagonism to the U.S.S.R., was the ruthless policy adopted by the Soviet authorities of openly appropriating public and private property, in flagrant disregard of agreements concluded in this score with the Western Allies.

It was laid down in the declaration signed jointly by Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta, in February, 1945, that both the relative proportions of the reparations obtainable from conquered Germany by the victor states and the precise methods of obtaining them should be decided upon and defined by a special Commission. That Commission had not started to function—in point of fact, it had not even been formed—when the Russian occupation forces began confiscating military and technical property and resources in every corner of the Eastern Zone.

In order to give some semblance of legality to this process of daylight robbery, the looted stores, which were rapidly transported to the Soviet Union, were glibly described as "trophies of war." But the Yalta declaration had made no mention of "trophies," and, in any event, little of the

industrial, technical and even household equipment carted off to the U.S.S.R. could possibly have merited such a description.

Nor had the Yalta agreement sanctioned the wholesale expropriation of the very means of life from the German people; on the contrary, it had specified that property eventually sequestered should be confined to items which made up the nation's war potential. But a whole host of the goods removed to the U.S.S.R. had nothing whatever to do with war, but provided, on the contrary, the basic means for peaceful existence. It might be supposed that such "military trophies" were looted without the Kremlin's knowledge, by officials who could not resist despoiling a broken people. But, in fact, the campaign of robbery was personally directed from Moscow by Saburov, now Deputy President of the Council of Ministers, while weekly reports, detailing stores removed and those which awaited removal, were flown punctually to the Politbureau.

Not only was it perfectly clear that Stalin and Molotov knew what was going on, and approved of the process—it became increasingly evident that their deliberate purpose was to reduce the Germans to destitution—to set them back, economically, by half a century.

This, indeed, had been said in so many words by Lieutenant General Kutsevalov, the official appointed to brief me, and a number of other officers posted for work with SVAG, before we left Moscow, "Comrade Stalin and the Government," he said, "have confronted us all with the task of putting Germany back by forty to fifty years!" And I heard the same directive given at a meeting by Marshal Sokolovsky. All this time, Molotov was repeatedly declaring at international conferences that the U.S.S.R. wished in every way to speed the economic rehabilitation of the German people.

No circumstances could have justified the looting which went on in the Eastern Zone of Germany, to the lasting dishonour of the Soviet authorities and their leaders in Moscow. Watches, rings and other personal valuables were shamelessly filched from Germans in the public streets, in the name of "Soviet liberation," and radio sets were stolen from houses like apples from an orchard. Even furniture was removed from the wretched population, who had, of



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course, no kind of legal redress against the official daylight burglars who despoiled them.

Cars, motor-cycles and bicycles were stolen in droves. Private vehicles of German make can be seen in every town of the Soviet Union to this day; and, between 1945 and 1947, they outnumbered any others in Moscow's streets. Sowing and reaping machines and other agricultural equipment were removed from German farms in enormous quantities, as were the technical equipment of radio stations, telephone exchanges and laboratories. Books were filched from libraries and schools.

Most of the smaller booty was not even appropriated for use by the State when it reached the U.S.S.R. It became the personal property of Commissars and Party Leaders. Those who had sacrificed least in the war gained most from the post-war pillage.

While these sneak-thief tactics were being pursued, the Soviet Union tabled an official demand for the grotesquely exaggerated sum of ten milliard dollars in reparation from Germany, a claim which received the support of America alone.

The peoples of the U.S.S.R. knew little of the official looting carried out in Germany (though it was, of course, realised that Red Army soldiers had got away with a limited amount of personal spoil). In fact, they were systematically misled on the whole subject of war compensation. They were taught that the Western nations were "sabotaging" the Soviet Union's "lawful claims" for reparations, despite the fact that these had at first been "recognised and approved" by "all the Allies." Furthermore, they were assured that their own complete lack of benefit from the booty already gathered was due, in some remarkable fashion, solely to the "treacherous violation" of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements by America and Britain!

They were certainly never told that a body of Soviet economic experts decided, in September, 1947, that the reparations demanded by Russia, and looted in advance as "war trophies," were far in excess of the actual amount of damage inflicted on the U.S.S.R. by the German occupation. Nor was it divulged to them that the reason they gained

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nothing themselves from the "war trophies" was simply that those of a private or portable nature had been pocketed by the Party bosses, while looted capital equipment had been devoted solely to the further expansion of the U.S.S.R.'s armament industry.

Deliberate use was also made of plants still in production in the Eastern Zone when the Russians took over the territory. For instance, the famous Zeiss optical works were commandeered entirely for the supply of precision instruments for the Soviet forces. (Later, the whole organisation was removed to the U.S.S.R., where, today, it is turning out bombing apparatus and much other war equipment.) Particular attention, too, was paid to the restoration of the rocket research centres at Peenemunde and Bleicherode.

The search for scientific designers and inventors proceeded apace. Large numbers were "captured" for work in the U.S.S.R. by methods of deceit and open bribery: few accepted the transfer willingly. Take the case of a well-known technologist, Benz, whom I knew personally.

Benz, as a provisional step, was arrested and imprisoned in the cellars of the SVAG headquarters. Under threat of torture, he was induced to sign a letter to his wife, saying that he had voluntarily decided to leave for the Soviet Union. Immediately she received the letter, Frau Benz hurried to Berlin. The next day they were packed on to a plane and flown to Moscow.

Such covert kidnapping occurred every day. And, once in the Russian capital, the unhappy scientists were compelled to write glowing letters to Germany, enlarging upon the manifest wonders of the U.S.S.R., as a bait to their reluctant colleagues to make the trip themselves.

It is my conviction that the deep-laid schemes of the Kremlin are very near to realisation in Germany, and that the threat of civil strife there, leading almost inevitably to a third world war, is perilously real. I hope profoundly that my fears are groundless.

Let me examine, briefly, the factors which have led me to this belief.

It is, first of all, abundantly clear that the Kremlin's purpose was always to sabotage the work of the Allied Control Council in Berlin. Stalin and Molotov never proposed for

a moment to co-operate in the activities of this body. Their intention was simply and flatly to make the situation of the Western Allies in the German capital intolerable—in fact, to force the British, French and Americans to leave the Russian authorities in sole possession.

Once the Allies had been driven out of the city, it was planned to establish a "People's Democratic Government." This administration, ostensibly German to the core, would in fact be made up of obedient Quislings, directed from behind the scenes by Moscow and backed by a large and well-trained military force disguised as a "People's Police," consisting mainly of picked Communist devotees.

The "People's Democratic Government," on the strength of its location in the capital, would at once claim to represent the whole of Germany, and, on these specious grounds, would launch a popular campaign for the immediate withdrawal of all occupation forces and the consequent transfer of their control to its hands. The U.S.S.R. would then offer to withdraw its own occupation troops without delay; no less could be incurred by this move, since the well-armed "People's Police" would merely be waiting to step into the Red Army men's shoes.

The Western Allies, confronted with the withdrawal of Russian forces, would find themselves in a delicate situation. Clearly it would be suicidal to remove their own occupation troops. Yet if the Russians withdrew, and they did not follow suit, they would become the target of every disgruntled German nationalist successfully deluded by Soviet propaganda. Certain sections of their own peoples, too, might have much to say concerning the continued cost of occupation when the amiable Soviet Union had so clearly revealed that the presence of the victor nations in Germany was no longer needed!

At length, the Kremlin believed, the Allies would give in to this two-sided pressure and remove their forces from Germany altogether. Then the "People's Police" would be in virtual control of the country, and the task of uniting the Germans beneath the rule of the Politbureau would present few, if any, major complications.

With this long-term strategy in mind, the Kremlin always regarded the presence of the British, American and French authorities in Berlin as a purely temporary inconvenience,

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and one to be removed as swiftly as possible by making their existence there intolerable, both in their own eyes and in those of the Germans.

As things turned out, the Western Allies very successfully countered all attempts to turn them out of Berlin, while the SED consistently failed to gain any real measure of popular support. But, gratifying as these facts may be, they only mean that the Kremlin has had to plan fresh tactics; its object of "sovietising" the whole of Germany has indubitably remained unchanged, and therein lies the danger to-day. The Politbureau may make some kind of surprise move at any moment, and the Allies must be vigilantly prepared to overcome it, whatever its character. Particularly perilous, in my estimation, is the plot between Stalin and Pieck to create a form of political union between Germany and the U.S.S.R. Unless this plan is nipped in the bud, chaos lies ahead.

## CHAPTER II

### A summons to the Kremlin

ON the evening of April 13th, 1947, I was working in my flat in Berlin. Suddenly the telephone rang. My wife, who knew I did not wish to be disturbed, answered it to say that I was in bed. The speaker insisted that he must speak to me personally, however, and, after a suitable interval, I announced my presence, yawning loudly. I was told that SVAG's Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Dratvin, wanted to see me immediately on urgent official business.

No sooner had I replaced the receiver than the bell rang again. This time it was Deputy Commander in Chief at SVAG, Colonel-General Kurochkin. The moment I had finished with him, his chief assistant in aviation matters, Lieutenant General Kutsevalov, came on the line.

I gathered from this headlong series of telephone calls that Marshal Bulganin, Minister of Armed Forces of the U.S.S.R., had 'phoned Dratvin, while Marshal of Aviation Vershinin had 'phoned Kutsevalov, to say that I must report without fail to the Kremlin the following day. Having been received by the Council of Ministers, it was hinted, I should probably be ushered into the presence of Stalin himself.

No intimation was given to me of the reason for this astonishing summons. Hoping to obtain a little private information I rang up Vershinin's Secretariat on the direct line to Moscow, but they only said, " You will find out what it's all about when you get here! " I tried another Moscow number, with similar lack of result. In desperation, I put in a call to Major General of Aviation, Vasili Stalin, the dictator's son, who happened to be in Berlin at the time. But his A.D.C. told me that Vasili was holding a highly important conference with a German girl in his apartment, and must on no account be disturbed. I was not surprised. Stalin Junior was renowned for his peccadilloes in Moscow, and had already proved himself intensely susceptible to the charms of ex-Nazi women, in

comparison with whom, he explained, " Russian wenches were so much rubbish."

Without any concrete information concerning the reason behind my call to the Kremlin, I could only conclude that it related in some way to rocket and reactive technology, which had formed the subject of much correspondence between various officials there and myself. Accordingly, I packed a despatch case with notes, calculations and blue-prints, and set off for SVAG.

During our air trip to Moscow, weather conditions became so frightful that the pilots asked Kutsevalov for permission to make a forced landing. He would not hear of it. " When a Lieutenant General is summoned to the Kremlin, no storm can stop him ! " he said.

The pilots told him that they were going to land, with or without his authority. At once he threatened to shoot them if they did not maintain their course. But the plane bounced and rocked to such an alarming extent, that at length he turned to me for some professional advice. " Will the whole machine fall to pieces if we keep on like this ? " he inquired.

" Yes," I said.

At that, in some apprehension, he ordered the pilots to change direction. After some time, we found ourselves circling Riga. The frantic staff at the airfield warned us that to land would be suicide; visibility was nil, and they could hardly see each other, let alone guide an approaching aircraft. But, by that time, our tanks were practically empty, and the pilots brought the plane down, through blankets of fog, without a word. By some miracle, we failed to crash.

" Riga ! " screamed Kutsevalov. " Tokaev, we are doomed ! We face cruel punishment ! " He stumbled to a telephone and rang up Vershinin, who proceeded to blast us both as cowards and poltroons. How had we dared to lose our way, when the Kremlin awaited us ?

There was nothing we could do, however, save spend the night in the Latvian capital. We were driven to the best hotel in the town, a private house, " bolshevised " into a fourth-rate lodging house. There was no bathroom and no running water. Certainly the building boasted a telephone

and a water-closet, but neither worked—a state of affairs by no means uncommon in the U.S.S.R. The place was almost unbelievably dirty.

I changed my mind about sleeping in the hotel, and sought out an old friend of mine who lived nearby. We talked all night. In the morning, I went back to the hotel for breakfast. The duty attendant asked me why I had not slept there. I had to explain that I did not care for lice. Why, I demanded, was the bed-linen not changed and washed more frequently?

"We follow a strict plan," she said. "It will be laundry day again in just over a fortnight."

Later, I happened to comment upon the absurdity of being charged twenty-five roubles for a lousy bed, in squalid surroundings, in Latvia, while in defeated Germany one could get a bedroom, with clean sheets, a hot bath and excellent service, for something under eight marks. At once, a passenger, Colonel Smirhov, made a remark which exactly expressed the mentality of the dyed-in-the-wool Commissar. "We cannot be guided by the example of Fascist Germany in anything," he said severely. "Germany is a capitalist state, where the bourgeoisie grind the workers beneath their heels!"

At ten in the morning, despite the fact that the weather was still bad, we set off in our battered plane from Riga, and after two hours' flight, landed safely in Moscow.

A single telephone call assured me that Marshal Bulganin was highly displeased at our late arrival. It seemed probable that we should not be received at the Kremlin at all. But, some hours later, I received instructions to report to the private office of Marshal of Aviation Vershinin, at nine in the evening. Kutsevalov was already present when I arrived, and had clearly borne the brunt of the official fury at our delay. I escaped with a minor nagging.

From Vershinin's opening words, it became evident that the Kremlin was acutely interested in the so-called "Sanger Project," which I will describe in some detail later. Kutsevalov immediately announced that he could make a full report on the subject to Bulganin at any moment required. For my part, I told Vershinin quite frankly that it would take me at least a week to assemble the necessary data. Thereupon, the Marshal told Kutsevalov that he

wanted his report within half-an-hour, and ordered me to help him "polish" it!

Being well aware that Kutsevalov's knowledge of the Sanger scheme was based solely on scattered items of information which I had given him, I begged him to ask for further time in which to write his report. At that, he abused me roundly. Nothing would persuade him to miss this chance of distinguishing himself in the eyes of Bulganin.

Accordingly, I dictated the opening paragraphs of a report to a typist, and then—since our half-hour's grace had already elapsed—thrust a bundle of notes into his hand and urged him to read them at all costs, in the car or even in Bulganin's ante-room.

Kutsevalov and Vershinin then drove off to the Kremlin, and I was left sitting in the latter's office.

About an hour later, Vershinin came on the line, and told me to report at once to the Council of Ministers. I repeated that I could not produce a satisfactory report on the Sanger project without at least a week's intensive preparation, but he insisted that I should present myself at the Kremlin nevertheless. He added, as some consolation, that my friend, Major General Mikoyan, would be there and had already assured the Ministers that I was perfectly capable of giving them the details they required. Needless to say, despite my misgivings, I had to obey his instructions.

It seemed that Kutsevalov had not seen Bulganin at all. Instead, he and Vershinin had been ushered into a meeting of the Council of Ministers held in the private office of N. A. Voznesensky, Deputy President of the Council. Besides these three, there were present Malenkov, Khrushchev (Minister of Aviation Industry), Ustinov (Minister of Armed Forces), Yakovlev, and Artem Mikoyan. It was clearly a conference at which something more than the customary demagogic chatter was needed.

Kutsevalov's report, however, as he saw fit to deliver it, consisted of nothing but routine screeches from the moulted and over-worked parrot of Party dogma. "The Sanger project opens up new vistas of glory for the Soviet Military Air Forces . . . Sanger planes can beat all records—hence we must build them. . . . Wall Street and Downing Street already have Sanger aircraft under construction . . . we must overtake and out-pace the capitalist



nations, in accordance with the constant teaching of that supreme friend of aviation, the leader of world proletarian revolution, Comrade Stalin! . . . Capitalism is decaying, and can no longer further the cause of science, but we, under Stalin's guidance, will overcome all the difficulties we encounter . . . we assure our Leader that we will mobilise German scientists for the triumphant execution of the Sanger project, to the lasting benefit of our Socialist Fatherland! "

Naturally enough, he could not answer a single scientific question addressed to him. The Ministers became more and more incensed at his witless behaviour. Finally, Malenkov barked at Vershinin, " Where is Tokaev? Why is he not here? "

" Comrade Tokaev has told me that he is not fully prepared to make a report on the Sanger matter at once," Vershinin explained.

" What do you mean, not fully prepared? " broke in Voznesenski. " I have packets of notes and reports he's sent from Berlin, here on my desk. Tell him to report immediately."

I learned all this later, from my friend, Mikoyan.

Before I recount what subsequently took place at the conference, it may be of interest if I describe precisely how difficult it is for anyone to enter the Kremlin.

It stands, a town within a city, in the centre of Moscow, and is surrounded on every side by walls varying between twenty and fifty feet in height. The tops of these walls are constantly patrolled by N.V.D. guards. Somewhere inside work the twelve masters of the U.S.S.R.—Stalin, Molotov, Beriya, Malenkov, Mikoyan, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Andreev, Khrushchev, Bulganin, Kosygin and Shvernik. (At the time of which I am writing, there were two additional members of the inner ruling clique—Zdhanov, who died in 1948, and Voznesenski, who was removed from office.)

The Kremlin also houses the staffs and offices of the Politbureau, the Presidium of the Supreme Council and the Council of Ministers.

The only entrances in common use are the Borovicheskiye Gate, in the Komintern Ulitsa; The Spasskiye Gate, open-

ing on to the Red Square, and a narrow opening, for pedestrians only, standing beside this. All are heavily guarded, night and day, and the buildings inside are lined with sentinels.

Nobody, of course, can enter the Kremlin of his own free will—you have to be summoned there by the Komendatura. You report at the hour appointed, to the Passes Bureau at the Spasskye Gate. There you present your papers, and mention the name of whichever exalted official desires to see you. The NKVD officer on duty scrutinises the documents, checks his list to see if he has authority to admit you, registers your particulars, issues you with a pass, and demands (a little belatedly) to know whether you are armed. You then pass on to the smaller Spasskye Gate, where most of this process is repeated, though somewhat more rigorously. Here the officer earnestly compares the photograph on your passport with your own features, examines each seal and signature on your papers, checks every letter of your surname, christian name and patronymic name in the pass and your documents, and—if he has no more qualms—salutes you politely and permits you to enter.

No sooner are you through the gate than a sentry bars your path with a naked bayonet. He compares your pass and passport, then directs you down a narrow path which leads to the building occupied by the Council of Ministers. Here, a further guard examines your documents before motioning you to a basement cloakroom, where you wash your hands and brush your hair, like a small boy attending a party.

From there, you mount a wide staircase, only to encounter another sentry, who busies himself with your passport and pass in exactly the same manner as the rest. From then onwards, you tend to lose count of the guards: you meet them every ten yards or so, and all wish to see your papers. Finally, an officer leads you to the room numbered on your pass.

The corridors are well lit, richly carpeted, and incredibly clean. Everywhere there is a portentous hush.

If it is difficult to get into the building of the Council of Ministers, it is virtually impossible to enter the block in which Stalin himself has his office and the Politbureau holds

its meetings. Outwardly, it is an insignificant pile, tucked away in a comparatively secluded corner of the grounds. Here the customary plethora of guards is reinforced by a special Inner Kremlin section, composed entirely of NKVD officers.

Foreign visitors to the Kremlin are rarely bothered in any way by these excessive security measures. The Boroviche-skiye Gate is reserved solely for their use, and they drive through with only the most perfunctory check of their credentials, provided always that the guards know they are expected.

The Party leaders themselves use the main Spasskiye Gate. A deep ring gives the signal that a vehicle containing the bodyguard of one of the "well-loved leaders" of U.S.S.R. is approaching. It hurtles through the gateway, and is followed, at breakneck speed, by a bullet-proof car containing the great man himself. Most members of the Politbureau use American Packards, heavily armour-plated.

I entered Voznesensky's private office, having had my papers checked at ten yard intervals for at least a quarter of a mile (or so it seemed to me), and found the conference awaiting me with some impatience. Kutsevalov was sweating profusely; his great face looked like an over-ripe tomato. I introduced myself, in the official manner, and Voznesensky motioned me to a chair next to Artem Miko-yan. My friend whispered, "This fat fool has sunk up to his neck in a bog of fatuity. Now you'll have to extricate him."

"Comrade Tokaev," said Voznesensky, "Lieutenant General Kutsevalov has been trying to tell us something about the Sanger project, but unfortunately we've been unable to comprehend a word that he's said. You know this book?" He held up a translation of a secret work which the famous German scientist, Sanger, had sent to Hitler, Goering, Goebbels, Milch, and other Nazi leaders in 1944.

I replied that I knew the book well, and was perfectly familiar with all essential aspects of Sanger's plan.

"Will you give us the substance of it, in your own words?" Voznesensky asked.

"Nikolai Alekseevich," I protested, "I have not yet

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had a chance of preparing the necessary notes for a detailed report. I have told Comrade Vershinin so."

Malenkov leaned forward. "Your caution does you credit," he said. "But give us the facts in broad detail. We shan't be particular about any technical points."

For a moment, I was nonplussed. There seemed so much to explain. The facts were that three Soviet engineers—Miklashevsky, Moisheev and I—had come upon copies of the Sanger-Bredt Project in different corners of Germany, quite independently of each other. Briefly, the Project envisaged the construction of a piloted rocket plane capable of flying vast distances at enormous speed and altitude. Were such aircraft made in the U.S.S.R., it would be perfectly possible to bomb towns and cities in countries as distant as America, Canada, Australia and South Africa, in a single "hop" from Moscow. All "capitalist" strongholds in the world would be within range, and the Sanger plane would henceforth be the pick of the Kremlin's armoury.

Sanger was well known to me as the author of another scientific book, and I knew that his theories merited respect. At the same time, I approached his latest work with a certain caution, being determined to examine every facet of the Project, and weigh its practical possibilities with the utmost care, before bringing it to the notice of the Government.

Miklashevsky, however, was troubled by no such scruples. He had no sooner mastered the bare details of Sanger's theory than he hurried hot-foot to Moscow, raised an immense hullabaloo with the authorities concerning it, and had copies of the German scientist's notes and calculations printed in Russian.

As for Moisheev, he was working as Chief Engineer in the Soviet-German Aircraft Designing Bureau, *Zibel*, in Halle. He was a blunt and courageous man who knew just as well as the rest of us that, despite the persistent, triumphant bel-lows of Soviet propaganda, the U.S.S.R. was monstrously backward in aviation technique. (At the end of the war, for instance, we did not possess a single rocket plane.)

Moisheev accordingly pointed to the Sanger Project as an example of imaginative research by a wide-awake nation, and, in a long report, expressed a good deal of sharp criticism of our own fumbling Ministry of Aviation Industry.

This report was given to Kutsevalov, who passed it on to me for my personal comments. I added a terse paragraph to it vilifying the blinkered outlook and haphazard direction which permeated the industry, and deprecating the choice of its official representatives in Germany, including their leader, Lieutenant General Kutsevalov!

Soon after this, I was ordered to prepare a report on the general achievements of German scientists in the field of rocket propulsion, and, in compiling this, I laid particular stress on the work done by Sanger and Bredt. Later, I wrote sundry papers on the German Aviation Research Academy, the aerodynamic laboratories, and the elaborate experimental stations the Nazis had built in various parts of the country.

All these reports went to Moscow, and, in due course, reached Malenkov.

The result was that I was inundated with requests for further information. Particular interest was aroused by my repeated assertions that the Ministry of Aviation Industry was sadly failing to take full advantage of the knowledge possessed by German specialists. My notes on the Sanger Project produced almost hysterical clamour for fuller details, culminating, as things turned out, in my summons to the Kremlin.

I gave my views to the conference as concisely as I could. Sanger, I emphasised, was undoubtedly a brilliant theorist in the field of rocket propulsion. His plans for a super-plane revealed great imagination, a bold approach to highly complex problems, and a general grasp of his subject which was years ahead of that attained by our own aeronautical experts.

Nevertheless, I pointed out, his project was still in an embryonic stage, and a vast amount of work would be needed to bring it to any kind of practical fulfilment. At present, it was barely more than a rough draft.

Furthermore, I could not agree with all Sanger's promises. I could not believe, for instance, that any rocket engine could conceivably develop the enormous power he claimed to be feasible. Even if the fuel problem were solved satisfactorily, the question of the effect of the consequent heat on metals had still to be faced. All in all, I concluded, a comprehensive research programme, involving

prolonged work by experts and the construction of many laboratories and workshops, would have to be launched if the Sanger project was to be explored and exploited to the extent it merited.

These comments were well received, especially by Malenkov and Voznesensky, who cried at several points, "Hear, hear!" or "Exactly!" Accordingly, I asked permission to put forward a few unofficial and purely personal views. They agreed at once, and Malenkov declared that such opinions would be even more valuable than a formal report.

Emboldened by this, I bluntly said that, in my opinion, we were far behind other nations in the sphere of reactive and rocket technology. (Here, Malenkov and Voznesensky looked quickly at each other, and talked, for a time, in low tones.) If we did not do something about it swiftly, we were going to fall even further behind than we were. I was, I explained, not concerned with the causes which underlay our failure, but only with the situation as it existed at present, and the best and most urgent means of righting it. ("Precisely!" Malenkov cried.) A thorough examination of the Sanger Project would prove invaluable, partly because it might enable us to produce a super-plane, but, far more importantly, because of the experience such research would give to our scientists in solving related problems and preparing a base for future activities. In other words, by mastering Sanger's theories, our experts would be able to begin where he had left off.

I went on to propose the formation of a highly-qualified group of Soviet engineers and scientists to draft a concrete plan of action. This group should make a point of enrolling German specialists, and might even succeed in attracting Sanger himself. Its ultimate objectives could be condensed in a line—to make Soviet planes fly higher, faster and farther.

These observations, with various technical details which I have omitted to mention here, took some forty minutes to deliver. When I had finished, Voznesensky rounded upon the unhappy Kutsevalov. "You see, Comrade, the problems we wished to discuss are not dismissed as easily as you imagined!" he snapped.

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Kutsevalov jumped to his feet. "I beg your pardon, Comrade Voznesensky!" he said.

"You beg my pardon . . . !" Voznesensky was about to go on, when the telephone rang. It was Bulganin, asking what had occurred at the meeting.

Voznesensky explained that Kutsevalov had made a fool of himself, and added, "Luckily, Comrade Tokaev was able to give us the facts we required, with great clarity." Clearly, Bulganin did not remember me, and asked who I was, for Voznesensky went on, "I think I am right in saying he's from the Zhukovsky Academy, but somehow he has been side-tracked into Sokolovsky's red-tape emporium!"

The talk turned upon the most favourable locality in which basic research on the Sanger Project might be carried out. Somebody suggested Germany, and Voznesensky asked me what I thought of the idea.

"Surely we can't do it there," I said. "That would be a patent infringement of the agreement drawn up at the Potsdam conference."

They smiled cynically. One of them said, "What has the Control Commission done to this man?"

Disconcerted, I stammered, "Don't you consider that our Allies would react rather sharply to such action?"

"What on earth have our Allies got to do with it?" asked Malenkov. "Don't waste you time in bothering about them, Comrade Tokaev."

"In any case," I suggested, "it would be difficult to ensure the necessary secrecy if we launched the scheme in Germany."

"Yes, that's a point which really does need some consideration," Malenkov said.

"Personally, I think the best solution would be to carry out the research work at our own Central Aerohydrodynamic Institute here," I continued, "and concentrate, in Germany, on obtaining the services of skilled engineers and technicians."

Was it true, asked Voznesensky, that I already employed a group of German specialists capable of working on the Sanger Project?

I answered that I had formed such a group, but that its members were not, in the main, highly qualified, and

would certainly find the work concerned beyond their capabilities. None of them had known Sanger himself, and his theories would be entirely new to them.

"But surely they can be trusted with some kind of serious work?" asked Voznesensky, to whom the babbling Kutsevalov had described my ex-Nazi technicians in glowing terms as a body of brilliant scientists.

"The facts about the group are simply these," I said. "It is headed by one Doctor Lange, who is quite a good engineer, and it contains some fair aerodynamists, aircraft designers and fuel experts. At present, they are working mainly on plans connected with aerodynamic pipes for the U.S.S.R., and future activities scheduled include research on the aerodynamics of aircraft wings, gasodynamic pipes and the general subject of supersonic speed. As far as the exploitation of the Sanger Project goes, my opinion is that Lange's men could be used, at the very best, as a supplementary force to the main research group."

They discussed this point briefly, and then began to bombard me with questions concerning Sanger himself. Did I know him personally? What was he doing? Where was he working? How could we best persuade him to work in Moscow? Should I be able to make immediate contact with him? What kind of man was he? What was his true scientific worth?

I told them that, to my way of thinking, Sanger had all the romantic imagination of a Jules Verne, but that his practical ability did not necessarily match his ideas. In particular, it was known that he suffered from a lack of detailed designing experience, and had been helped considerably in his theoretical work by Frau Brandt. At present, I added, he was in France, working with Professor Gregory. I had never met him personally.

Malenkov and Voznesensky took the view that I should get to know Sanger, make friends with him, and privately persuade him to decamp for Moscow. I did not relish this task, and said at once that I feared it would prove beyond my capabilities.

"Then you must increase your capabilities!" commented Khrunichev. "Sanger will obviously be supremely valuable to us."

Here Kutsevalov saw fit to pipe up again. He could



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wheedle Sanger into joining us at any time, he declared. He was not a pessimist, like Comrade Tokaev. He knew what had to be done, and could do it. Anyway, Sanger was not in France at all, but in Austria.

"Shut up!" said Voznesensky.

After further discussion, the meeting closed, but Vershinin, Khrunichev and I were told to remain.

As soon as the door had closed behind Malenkov and the rest of them, Voznesensky complimented me on the way in which I had marshalled my facts before the conference. He then asked me for full details of my education, qualifications and personal history. "I am just about to report to Comrade Stalin," he said. "The Sanger Project interests him enormously."

Now began the work of drafting a Government decree to authorise the creation of a Commission to examine and inquire into all work done by the Germans in the field of rocket and reactive technology, including the Sanger Project.

Khrunichev, Vershinin and I were joined in Voznesensky's ante-room by Major General Lukin, Deputy Minister of Aviation Industry, and by the seemingly inevitable Kutsevalov. The first two paragraphs in the draft decree presented no difficulties—they laid down that a Commission should be established, and that its members should leave for Germany without delay.

Grave disagreement arose, however, over the proposed composition of the Commission. Khrunichev insisted that Lukin should be its President, while I should be his Deputy. At once I declared that I would not work directly under Lukin in any circumstances. His conduct in forcibly exporting the scientific staff of the Junkers Aviation Works from Dessau to the U.S.S.R. had made his name a byword in Germany, and no Commission led by him could hope to produce satisfactory results there.

We were still arguing hotly on this point when Voznesensky returned from his audience with Stalin. He sent for Malenkov, and, as soon as the latter had arrived, Khrunichev read out the draft decree naming Lukin as President. He made no reference to the fact that I violently disagreed with his choice, but I interrupted with a

suggestion that the Commission should be headed by a well-known and extremely capable Doctor of Technical Science, General Bolkhovitkov.

Voznesensky answered that the General could not be trusted—an allegation which I knew to be nonsense. I found it infuriating that a man of Lukin's type should enjoy the confidence of the upper hierarchy, while such outstanding experts as Bolkhovitkov, Tupolev and Putilov (to mention but three) should be barred from advancement because they could not always be relied upon to grovel before the Politbureau.

For the time being, the question of the President's appointment was left in abeyance.

But, later in the conversation, Malenkov said that all work on the Sanger Project would have to be organised by the Ministry of Aviation Industry, under the direct supervision of Khrushchev himself. Whereupon I burst out, quite involuntarily, "In that case, nothing will ever come of it!"

As I sat there, wishing devoutly that the floor would open beneath my feet, Malenkov surprised me by grinning amiably and saying, "I'm not altogether certain that I don't agree with you, Comrade."

The furious Khrushchev started to say something, but Voznesensky cut him short. "We are not interested in what you think!" he said icily.

We talked of the immediate problems before us, and debated whether research on the Sanger Project should take precedence over work which was already in hand on flying bombs.

"I was in Noginsk the other day, and saw them trying to make V-2s," said Malenkov. "I was not impressed. The work is going very slowly, and anyway, the flying bomb is an out-moded weapon now."

"But surely we should complete our work on it?" asked Khrushchev.

"Certainly we must complete it, but not to the detriment of work on more modern weapons," replied Malenkov.

"But, Georgi Maksimilyanovich," said Khrushchev nervously, "you yourself have often declared that the flying bomb will still have its uses in any future war."

Malenkov shrugged his shoulders. "The point is," he

said, " that the V-2 is good for 400 kilometres, and no more. And, after all, we have no intention of making war on Poland. Our vital need is for machines which can fly across oceans ! "

Voznesensky asked me whether the British and Americans were interested in the possibilities of the Sanger Project. I said that I did not know, though I thought it highly probable that they were. " If it be true," I went on, " that the Americans are so greatly concerned with rocket weapons that they have transformed Texas into a vast Peenemunde, as is often said, it is hardly possible that they have overlooked Sanger's plan. They have combed Germany's scientific centres pretty thoroughly. And they have plenty of dollars to spend on pure research work."

It was after three in the morning when I finally left the Kremlin. A car awaited me, near the Spasskye Gate. The driver—a young girl—was fast asleep at the wheel. I awakened her gently, and told her to drive herself home. " But what about you? " she asked. " I've been instructed to drive you to wherever you want to go."

" It doesn't matter," I said. " I'll walk."

She asked me for a cigarette, and I gave her one. " How is Comrade Stalin? " she asked.

" Safe and sound," I said.

" Do you think there will be another war? " she demanded. It was the question which never left the minds of the people of Russia for very long.

And its answer, I reflected, as I walked slowly home through Moscow's silent streets, depended directly on the men I had just visited in the Kremlin. It was clear enough that, prompted by their power-drunk leader, they were already contemplating a fresh world conflict. It sickened me to think that people should be so placidly deluded as they seemed to be, at that time, by Russia's persistent propagandist bleats for peace at any cost—that men like Henry Wallace, Zilliacus and even Bernard Shaw should profess to recognise Stalin as an apostle of world brotherhood.

I shaved, had a bath and changed into mufti. Then I picked up Stalin's *Problems of Leninism* and read a passage in which he pointed out that exploitation and expansion had always characterised a successful State of feudal times, and

added naively that it should not be imagined that a Proletarian State should divorce its methods totally from those applied under earlier systems of government.

Exploitation and expansion were the twin props upon which his own regime existed. The fruits of the enslaved peoples' work were aircraft, tanks and guns; the country's well-being was measured by its military strength.

My sombre thoughts were interrupted by a ring of the telephone. It was a good friend of mine who had heard that I was in Moscow, and wanted to call for me early to take me to see General Gorchakov, an official closely associated with one of the city's largest military establishments. I agreed, my friend turned up soon after seven o'clock, and we set off together.

Gorchakov's first question was, "How are the Western imperialists behaving? Still doing their damndest to start another war?"

"Well . . .," I said.

"If they do start another one," he blustered, shaking a fist theatrically, "we shall hurl all the Churchills, Trumans, Attlees, Blums and Schumachers into the sea, as meat rations for the sharks!"

My friend and I nodded profoundly.

"Here in Moscow," he continued, "it is nothing but work, work, work! I tell you, I haven't even been to bed for thirty-six hours. Last night I had to go to the Kremlin. They kept me there until three o'clock this morning. We were discussing cultural reform in the Army. Malenkov and Zhdanov kept on applauding passages in my speech!"

"*Malenkov?*" I said.

"Malenkov indeed! We touched upon the question of Germany in passing."

"And what were your conclusions?" I asked, without troubling to tell him that I myself had talked most of the night in Malenkov's company.

"You're all being far too soft with the Allies. Hell and damnation, they must be thrown out of Berlin. It is frightful to think that the two centres of our occupation zones, Berlin and Vienna, are degraded by the presence of British, French and American rascallions!"

"I honestly think," I ventured, "that the Western nations are not quite as supine as we like to imagine them."

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"Nonsense!" he said. "You can rest assured that, in 1950, Berlin will be far behind the frontiers of the new Soviet Europe. Suslev has said so himself."

He continued in this strain for some three hours.

"You see, Grigori Aleksandrovich, how all these buffoons yelp for war," said my friend, as we walked away from the choleric General's office. "They parade for combat under the banner of peace!"

I asked him what the chief Moscow news had been during my absence.

"The same old news," he said gloomily. "We are moving full steam ahead towards Communist plenty. There is little enough to eat on the way, however, despite our much-advertised triumphs in production."

He opened a copy of *Pravda*, and held it up before me. "See!" he said. "All our targets are exceeded, all our aims fulfilled! And yet we're still hungry. Instead of food, we get meetings and conferences, at which the capitalists are cursed for instigating war and we are cursed for failing to display enough revolutionary vigilance." He gave me a sideways look. "Talking of that, why haven't you been arrested?" he asked.

"Why the devil should I be arrested?"

"Simply because you are working abroad. Nearly everybody who goes abroad is arrested on his return. People learn too much in foreign countries. It's safer to pack them off to Siberia, before they start to make awkward comparisons between life abroad and life in the U.S.S.R."

"I think you're exaggerating a bit," I said.

"No, I'm not. If a man comes back to a job in Moscow after he's worked abroad, you can be practically certain that he's an agent of the NKVD, and was merely sent out of the country to spy on his fellows. For an honest chap sent to Germany, or anywhere else, for the Government there is only one safe policy—and even that may not save him."

"What is it?"

"Simply to keep on repeating until he's blue in the face that everything foreign is grotesquely inferior to anything Russian. That's the present official line, and they're plugging it for dear life. The idea, of course, is to bully the

people of Russia into the fantastic belief that they're happy."

He grinned. "Do you know, the Politbureau boys have solemnly laid down that all the great scientific discoveries and inventions in history are to be attributed to Russians? You've been away for a year, and you don't know how mad the Government has gone. It now becomes a legal obligation for every citizen of the U.S.S.R. to talk nonsense. If you want to keep out of prison, you will have to play lunatics too. When you buy a silk shirt in Germany, you must complain bitterly that its quality is far below that of Soviet shoddy. If you go to a German cinema, you must cry aloud that it is a pigsty compared with a Russian picture house. Should you drink German beer, you must protest, after every glass, that it tastes like rain-water in comparison with the ambrosial liquid served in Soviet cafes. If you drive along an autobahn, bawl to the heavens that it is a mere goat-track in relation to any highway in the U.S.S.R."

"And what should I say about Britain, France and America?"

"Such countries are hives of imperialism. Therefore, say that everything in them is hopelessly below the standard in Germany!"

## CHAPTER III

### In conference with Stalin

I PARTED from my friend, and went home. In a few minutes, the telephone rang. A voice instructed me not to stir from the 'phone until further notice. I sat down and read for some time, then, out of curiosity, lifted the receiver. At once, another voice barked "I am listening to you, Comrade Tokaev!" It seemed that I was directly connected to the Kremlin exchange.

An hour passed, and then another. Tired of waiting, I told the voice that I intended to have something to eat, and could be contacted at the Academy if I was wanted.

As soon as I reached home again, I announced my presence on the telephone, and asked the mysterious voice precisely why I had to sit imprisoned indoors for the rest of the evening. It answered, "I don't know!"

About nine o'clock, the voice informed me that a car was on the way to pick me up. I must hold myself in instant readiness—and leave my pistol at home, it added.

"Where is the car going to take me?" I asked.

"That you will find out when you get there," said the voice craftily.

"Am I likely to land up in prison?"

"Not for a moment!" said the voice. Don't worry!"

No car arrived, and the 'phone rang every few minutes. "What, are you still there? What's the delay? You should have left long ago!" it barked repeatedly. At length, no less a person than Colonel General Serov, First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, came on the line, and demanded to know why I had not departed. For at least the twentieth time, I explained that no car had come to fetch me.

Hardly had I finished speaking when Captain Nikitin, Serov's A.D.C., burst into my room without knocking. Within a few minutes, Serov himself arrived.

"So this is it!" I thought. "At least I am being arrested in some style!"

But all was well. They were taking me to see Stalin.

Two luxurious cars were standing outside the house. Nikitin rapidly led me to one; Serov was driven swiftly away in the other. Our M.V.D. chauffeur drove as though the devil were at his heels, continuously blaring the syren which is a standard fitting on all Government vehicles. Every policeman on traffic control in Moscow knows these syrens, and, at their first distant screech, waves his arms like a windmill to clear a free lane for the approaching dignitary. Frequently the "dignitary" turns out to be merely a chauffeur or a messenger on duty for his master—nevertheless, the policeman salutes as though his life depends upon it.

We entered the Kremlin by the Borovicheskye Gate, and at once my documents were scrutinised with an exhaustive thoroughness exceeding even that applied at the Spasskye Gate. It appeared to make no difference that I was in the company of the A.D.C. to the First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs: indeed, Nikitin's papers were examined almost as rigorously as mine.

As soon as the check was completed, we drove along an avenue, lined on both sides by a forest of sentries. At length, the car stopped at the Politbureau building. Here my credentials were again examined minutely, first by guards standing outside the door and then by guards standing inside it. The latter spent a good deal of time in peering at my eyes, my hair and my ears, and comparing them with the features shown in my photograph. An NKVD officer took my overcoat.

We mounted some steps and walked along a softly lit corridor. The walls could hardly be seen for guards, and a deadly silence reigned. "This," I thought, "is power! The most fabulous Eastern potentates in history have not equalled this nervous magnificence, where every yard of space has its guard, and every guard his finger on a trigger! Why should the Father of the Peoples have to hide himself so completely and apprehensively from the world? What is he so frightened about?"

We entered a door on the right at the end of the corridor, and found ourselves in the presence of Major General Poskrebyshv, Stalin's personal secretary and A.D.C.

Serov stood by his desk. Poskrebyshv, whom I had seen several times before, looked rather more hideous than



usual. He is tall, slightly hump-backed, heavily pock-marked. He always looks as though he is suffering from the most frightful kind of hangover, and his capacities for drinking vodka are known to be remarkable. He speaks in a low voice, and his conversation is full of the crudest expressions the Russian language is capable of producing. He gives the impression of being almost totally uneducated.

Very little is known of this man, either in the Soviet Union or the world outside, but he wields more power in the Kremlin than, for instance, Vyshinsky does.

Poskrebyshv is the only man on earth who is aware of everything Stalin commands. Every paper which reaches or leaves the dictator's desk has to pass through his hands. No visitors—not even a member of the Politbureau—can see Stalin without his express permission and approval. Stalin trusts him implicitly, and makes no kind of check on the way in which he carries out his directions. Even the Minister of Internal Affairs, who is feared more intensely than any other living person in Russia, has to dance obediently to Poskrebyshv's tune.

The A.D.C., of course, is careful to issue all his instructions in the sacred name of the leader. He hardly utters a sentence which does not start, "Comrade Stalin commands . . ." or "Comrade Stalin's opinion is . . ." or "The decision which Comrade Stalin has reached. . . ." But in fact he has brilliant opportunities of falsifying Comrade Stalin's directives—opportunities of which he may or may not take advantage.

This, then, was the man I now faced. "Why are you so late, Comrade Tokaev?" he asked in his snuffing voice. "Comrade Stalin has been waiting for you for twenty minutes."

I explained, for about the thirtieth time, that no car had called for me, and Poskrebyshv rose slowly and passed through the doorway to Stalin's office. A moment later, he was back again. "Comrade Stalin invites you to enter," he said.

I entered, with Serov behind me. I announced myself in the official manner, and Stalin approached me, peering into my eyes, with his mouth half-open. He shook hands with me. "How do you do, Comrade Tokaev?" he said.

Then he motioned me to a seat at a conference table which spanned one wall of the large room.

The table was surrounded by members of the Politbureau—Molotov, Malenkov, Zhdanov, Beriya, Mikoyan, Voznesensky and Voroshilov. I sat down between the last named. Serov stood fixedly behind my chair.

Stalin paced up and down beside the table, puffing at his pipe and talking to me in a tired voice. Now and again, he came close to me, and I looked deep into the eyes of the man whose portrait I had seen displayed on every wall of every room I could remember since early youth—the leader, the sage, the genius, the father!

Here, within a foot of me, was the absolute dictator of the U.S.S.R., the man who had perverted the classic tenets of Socialism for his own evil purposes, the man who was propagating a social system which effectually deprived mankind of freedom and hope.

This was the man who had the audacity to abuse Winston Churchill for fomenting war, who had informed the newspaper correspondent, Alexander Werth, that he personally had no thought of war—and who had summoned me to his presence merely because he thought that I might be able to aid his plans for the conquest of peaceful lands by air attack!

My eyes turned to Molotov, with his podgy face and bristling, grey moustache. He had been President of the Council of People's Commissars—Minister for assassination, one might say—during the worst period of Stalin's panic-stricken campaign against "enemies of the people," when Russians had been shot in battalions on the specious pretext that they were followers of Trotsky, Zinoviev or Bukharin, or simply because they were said to reveal "bourgeois tendencies." He had a heart of vitriol, and his policy had isolated the U.S.S.R. from the rest of the world.

On the right of Stalin's empty chair sat Malenkov, looking, I thought, like an over-fed scullion. It was he who led the Party in obsequiousness before the Father of Peoples. He spent his worthless life roaring, "Glory to Stalin!" His abject grovelling was notorious; "Gemal," as they called him, was second to none in beating his head on the ground before "Dzhugashvili!"

As Stalin talked on, I could not help wondering why he

had decreed that I should attend this particular conference. It transpired later that Voznesensky and Malenkov had submitted the draft decree concerning the proposed Commission to him, and had mentioned my criticism of Lukin's projected appointment as President. They had added that Tokaev was inclined to be a highly impertinent fellow! Stalin, however, had asked for a full summary of my comments, and had then 'phoned his son, Vasili, for a personal report on me. Next he had sent for the material on German rocket and reactive work which I had forwarded, from time to time, from Berlin, and then had suddenly commanded that I should be brought to his office.

Now he held up the Russian translation of Sanger's book. "You know this?" he asked.

"I do, indeed, Comrade Stalin," I said. "It contains the whole essence of the Sanger Project."

"Will you please tell us what this Sanger Project really embraces?"

I went over it all again, while the Ministers sat in silence, and Stalin walked up and down the room, occasionally fixing me with his eyes. When I had finished, he paused for a second, gave me a long look, and said, "You think, then, that we have a lot to learn from the Germans?"

"In certain directions, they can teach us a good deal, Comrade Stalin."

"Why should that be?" he demanded.

I recalled what my friend had said about the necessity of belittling foreign production, and realised that I was saying all the wrong things. "I do not know, Comrade Stalin," I answered carefully. "It seems possible that they devoted more concentrated attention to various aspects of research than we considered essential in the heat of the war."

Again he stood close to me, and looked straight into my eyes. "Is the Sanger Project realisable?" he asked.

I repeated what I had said to the Council of Ministers.

"Do you mean, then, that there is no point in our pursuing the plan?" he demanded.

"I do not think that we should necessarily devote all our energies to making the super planes Sanger envisages," I said. "We should rather examine his theories in detail and gain from them all the valuable data they have to offer."

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An exhaustive investigation into their true potentialities would help us enormously in solving problems we encounter daily at present, and give us a wonderful opportunity of training staff for future activities. If, in the course of testing Sanger's ideas, we succeeded in making a plane half as powerful as the one he foresees, we should not be doing so badly. At least we should know, by this means, whether his super craft was, in fact, a practical possibility. But I don't think we should spend a lot of time and money in going all-out for the super plane now. Let us learn to walk before we attempt to run. We must remember that nobody, not even Sanger, knows whether such a plane can really be built. And, in science, it is just as necessary to discover what is impossible as to determine what is possible! "

Mikoyan expressed his agreement with this. Beriya and Malenkov talked quietly and earnestly to each other across the conference table. Voroshilov, for some unaccountable reason, grinned. Zhdanov and Molotov stared at me with the hard and hungry look of starving wolves.

Stalin uttered a long-drawn "So . . .," then paused portentously. "If we develop the Sanger Project, it will be in order to make planes and not to obtain negative results," he said at length.

My face reddened, and I felt myself quailing before the man.

After all, he was the leader of Russia; there might be something in the reputation he held for being a genius! Who was I to disagree with him? Yet, at heart, I knew very well that Sanger's ideas were incapable of fulfilment at that juncture, particularly in the U.S.S.R., where no work at all had been carried out on rocket aircraft. No doubt, planes with the capacity envisaged by Sanger would be made eventually. But the time for them had not come yet.

Many nations, I told Stalin, were within measurable distance of creating planes which would bring Sanger's ideas to reality—but there was still a long way to go. And we, in Russia, had to catch up with these other countries before we could conceivably attempt the construction of any kind of world-beating super craft. That was why experimental reasearch work, in which a careful study of Sanger's ideas could be of the utmost use to us, was the first essential.

Stalin refilled his pipe with tobacco, lit it slowly, and said,

"Certainly research is necessary. But we still need Sanger planes, and their construction should be our immediate objective."

Malenkov eagerly pointed out that such planes would be capable of flying across the Atlantic and back in one hop!

"So they would," said Stalin, "and their possession would make it easier for us to talk to the gentleman-shop-keeper, Harry Truman, and keep him pinned down where we want him. Tokaev, we wish you to exploit Sanger's ideas in every way."

"I will do all I can, Comrade Stalin," I said, "though I cannot promise successful results."

"We will give you all the help and support you need," he said. "The important thing is to accept the task with full enthusiasm. You realise its vital importance?"

"I do, Comrade Stalin."

He looked at me steadily, then suddenly made a curious remark. "You see, we live in an insane epoch," he said.

After some further talk, Stalin handed a piece of paper and a pencil to Voznesensky. "Sketch out a draft decree," he said.

Then he turned to me. "Where is Sanger now?" he asked.

"To the best of my belief, he is in France, working with Professor Gregory."

"And why is he in France?" Stalin asked Serov, surprised.

"My information is that he's in Vienna," said Serov. "We'll get him!"

"We must get him," said Stalin. He raised the outstretched fingers of his hand above his head, and smiled. "He must volunteer to come to Moscow. If necessary, he must be made to volunteer."

"I understand," said Serov briefly.

Voznesensky looked up from the draft decree he was writing. "Comrade Stalin," he remarked, "yesterday, Comrade Tokaev spoke, among other things, of an aerodynamic pipe with a Makha Number in excess of 4. May he repeat the details?"

"By all means," said Stalin.

## STALIN MEANS WAR

"The Makha Number, as you know," I said, "indicates the relation between the weight of resistance encountered in flight and the speed of sound. The leader of my group of German technicians, Doctor Lange, recently told me that he could produce a pipe with a Makha Number greater than 4, provided that the necessary approval was obtained. I at once got in touch with Comrade Khrunichev on the matter, but he hasn't replied. Perhaps he considers there is no need for such a pipe—but in fact it would be impossible to exploit Sanger's ideas without it."

"Can Lange and his men produce it?" asked Stalin.

"I think it highly probable that they can, provided they are given some extra staff. It's perfectly feasible. In Kohel, I know for a fact, they're working on the production of pipes with Makha numbers of 7 or even 10. But we shall certainly need more German specialists. There are a great many who are being wasted at present, through being given completely unsuitable jobs."

"But why should that be? Why can't you rope in all the Germans you need?"

"Principally because the Germans fear to enter our service more than anything, Comrade Stalin," I answered. "Since German specialists were removed wholesale to the U.S.S.R. in 1946, whether they wanted to go or not, the whole population are afraid of us. And some of our own officials, for their part, are prejudiced against employing Germans. For instance, Doctor Kurt Tank, who was chief designer during the war for the firm of Fokke Wulf, offered of his own free will to join us. He was turned down by General Kutsevalov and General Lukin, on the grounds that he had been a member of the Nazi party."

"And what are your own feelings on that point?"

"I don't agree with the Comrades concerned."

"Where is Tank now?"

"I'm afraid I don't know," I said.

Stalin rounded on Serov. "Why has Tank been allowed to slip through our fingers?" he demanded.

"It was all the fault of Comrade Kutsevalov . . ." said Serov uncomfortably. "There are rumours that Tank is working with the French."

"You see! We beat the Germans, and now Von Braun,

Lippish, Sanger, Tank and all kinds of other experts are working for the Allies," Stalin complained. "We must concentrate very seriously on German specialists, Comrade Serov."

He paced up and down for a time, then addressing me again. "This Kutsevalov!" he said. "What is he doing with you in Germany? How did he get the job? Who appointed him?"

Before I could attempt to reply, Serov butted in with the statement that Kutsevalov had been sent to Berlin with the occupation force, as part of his ordinary military duties. This was a complete and barefaced lie, but Stalin appeared to swallow it without question. "Ah, old fox," I thought, "how they delude you!"

Voznesensky completed his draft decree, and read it aloud:—

"The Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. decrees that a Government Commission shall be formed for the purpose of directing and co-ordinating scientific research into aviation problems, with special relation to piloted rocket planes and the Sanger Project. The Commission shall be composed of the following:—

Colonel General Comrade Serov (President)  
Engineer Lieutenant Colonel Comrade Tokaev  
(Deputy President)  
Academician Comrade Keldysh (Member)  
Professor Comrade Kishkin (Member)

"The Commission shall leave immediately for Germany, to undertake its preliminary work. A full report of its activities, and of the results it has attained, must be rendered to the Council of Ministers by August 1st.

"Marshal of the Soviet Union Comrade Sokolovsky is hereby directed to give the Commission every assistance.

Moscow, the Kremlin, April 17th, 1947."

Stalin signed the draft, as President of the Council of Ministers, and rang for Poskrebyshv. "Have this formu-

lated," he said, " and arrange for Sokolovsky to 'phone me." Poskrebyshv went out.

Sokolovsky came on the line from Berlin in an incredibly short space of time. " Comrade Tokaev is with me," said Stalin. " He has given me some disquieting details. We must get rid of Kutsevalov, and replace him by a more efficient man—he muddles everything. Tokaev is to be appointed your Deputy in charge of scientific matters—now don't you overload him with red tape. I want particular attention paid to aviation research. The department handling it is to be reinforced and expanded. I understand from Comrade Tokaev that this kind of work has been neglected—we're not making nearly enough use of German specialists. A Government Commission has been formed to deal with the problem, and its members will be with you in a few hours. You will give them all the help you possibly can. Is all that clear? Right! Goodbye! "

This one-sided conversation did me a great deal of harm with Sokolovsky, who became convinced that I had been making complaints about him. Also, he was furious that I should have been summoned before Stalin without his knowledge, and lost no subsequent opportunity of making life difficult for me.

As soon as he had replaced the receiver, Stalin dismissed us. I went as far as the Borovichesky Gate with Serov, who looked at me murderously and uttered no word. Then I went home.

Despite the fact that I lived beneath a Communist regime for a number of years, and had experienced all the tension which habitually permeates the life of a Soviet citizen, I had never suffered particularly from nerves. Yet now, after a second sleepless night of talk in the Kremlin, I felt as though my head would burst. Thoughts whirled in my mind like dead leaves in an autumn gale.

It was evident that Stalin desired nothing so much as rocket aircraft capable of dropping bombs on the people of the U.S.A., whom his friend, Molotov, courteously characterised as " degenerate riff-raff." And I had been chosen to further these schemes to " make it easier for him to talk to the gentleman shopkeeper, Truman! "

**And Stalin's ultimate objective was global domination—**



the total subjection of humanity to the brutal sway of the handful of dictators in the Kremlin. Once "world revolution" had been effected, the earth would become a concentration camp, peopled entirely by a slave population. Freedom would become a dying memory. The age of serfdom would be restored—but a serfdom infinitely more fiendish than had ever been known before, thanks to the scientific resources at the rulers' disposal. Humanity would be made up solely of forced labourers and civil servants. And, if any nation, with dim thoughts of liberty stirring still in its numbed mind, attempted to revolt, it would be swiftly and painfully wiped out of existence.

After my two visits to the Kremlin, I knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that the people of the earth were doomed if Stalin were permitted to bring his plans to fulfilment. Previously, I had merely thought this—now I *knew* it in my deepest soul.

Could I possibly accept the responsible post the Kremlin had given me? Could I play my part in the conspiracy to betray humanity? Everything in me said, "No—you must not do it!"

What, then, was I to do? Refuse to take part in the work of the Commission? That would be fatal. As a Soviet officer disobeying direct instructions, I should be brought before a military tribunal and sentenced on the spot to death or—worse—subjected to weeks of physical torture and consigned to a slave-labour camp. I am not a coward, and the thought of death or torture did not disturb me unduly. But I saw no point in sacrificing myself aimlessly. If I backed out, somebody would be found to take my place, and the Commission would operate as planned, despite my absence. It simply would not help.

On the other hand, I was consumed with a desire to warn the world's people of the conspiracy being hatched against them. Stalin threatened their peace and security, their happiness and freedom, no less than had Hitler. And, in every country, the toadies and dupes of the Kremlin were spreading their lies, deluding their fellows into believing that Russia wanted to outlaw war and aggression from the earth.

Above all, I wanted to warn the peoples of the U.S.S.R. of the peril they faced. They wanted war as little as any-

body, and were sick of pouring out their blood at the iron behest of the imposters who ruled them. They had no dreams of conquest. On the contrary, they were secretly convinced that Stalin had dishonoured the name of Russia by his imperialist adventures against the minority peoples and by his unforgivable compact with Hitler in 1939. Had they possessed any voice in the direction of policy, they would unitedly have urged the restoration of independence to the Estonians, the Latvians, the Lithuanians, the Poles, the Roumanians, and all the other nations crushed beneath the Soviet jack-boot. And, far from supporting the maniac drive to produce rocket-planes capable of bombing the Western democracies, they would have wept with relief if the enormous expenditure on armaments had been directed to supplying the home market with the food and clothes that were so wretchedly needed.

The Russian people wanted genuine friendship, based on trust, between nations. They wanted to redeem the name of their country in the eyes of the free world. They wanted to "cultivate their own garden," and clear up the mess which so many dark years of Communism had engendered.

It was not only the motive behind the Commission's creation which disgusted me; I was appalled at the thought of having to be Serov's assistant. As First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, he was in fact the virtual chief of the NKVD. The inhuman ruthlessness of the regime was embodied in him, and he was probably the man most loathed in the whole of the U.S.S.R.

It was Serov who had been responsible for the shooting of Tukhachevsky and his associates. He had organised the forced deportation of almost a million Poles to Russia in 1939, and of hundreds of thousands of people from the Baltic States on the eve of Hitler's attack on the U.S.S.R. He had directed the banishment to the East of the Chechen-Ingush people, of the Balkars, the Karachai, the Kalmyks and the Crimeans.

As soon as the Soviet Military Administration was established in Germany, this travelling butcher was appointed Deputy to the Chief of SVAG in all security matters. He thronged Germany with his spies, and his merciless methods resulted in the murder of large numbers of the inhabitants of the Eastern Zone. He personally

## IN CONFERENCE WITH STALIN

supervised the mass kidnapping of German scientific specialists and skilled workers for work in Russia in 1946.

Now I was faced with the prospect of becoming this despicable creature's collaborator in Germany. Serov was so greatly hated that I even feared the effect of my appointment upon my friends. They would probably turn from me in disgust, refuse to shake hands with me!

## CHAPTER IV

### Stalin's son Vasili

WHILE these dismal thoughts were coursing through my mind, the telephone rang. It was Serov himself, to say that his Packard was on the way to pick me up—we were off at once. An hour later, we boarded a plane at the Central Airport with the two remaining members of the Commission, Keldysh and Kishkin. The weather was frightful, but Stalin had said that we would be in Berlin by the evening, and it did not enter anyone's head that our departure should be postponed by a second.

No sooner were we off the ground than Serov began to talk about the tasks which awaited us. He intimated that I should have to go to the Western Zone, or even to France, to "get" Sanger and Tank.

I replied that this sort of thing was far more in his line than mine. Could he not instruct one of his professional spies to contact the scientists?

"No," he said, "there is no need. There's nothing we have to hide—everything is quite open and above-board. You are the obvious man for the job!"

"But I'm an engineer," I protested, "not an agent of the secret police!"

"I don't care what you are—I'm sending you on an official mission. We need Sanger and Tank, and you must get in touch with them."

"And supposing I refuse?" I asked.

"I don't think you'll be fool enough to do that," he said. "It is Comrade Stalin's own wish that you should undertake this responsibility. He attaches enormous importance to the project." He grinned. "If you succeed, he will probably give you the Order of the Red Banner."

"I don't want any decorations," I said. "And I don't want to act as a paid spy."

He made no answer.

A little later, he began to talk about the Kremlin's long-term plans. "As soon as we have V-1s and V-2s and the Sanger plane under construction, we shall be able to say

and do what we like to the British and the Americans," he said. "We were too hasty in defeating Germany, you know, from some points of view. We should have allowed them to complete their work on the V-10—the rocket with which they proposed to bombard America. Then we could have taken it over ready-made. How much trouble that would have saved us! There would have been no need to search for people like Sanger and Tank!"

I mentioned the atomic bomb, and pointed out that the U.S.S.R. was miles behind the Western nations in its knowledge of nuclear science.

"Don't worry" said Serov. "There can hardly be another war before 1950 or 1951, and by that time we shall have more atomic bombs—and better ones—than the Americans. We must get hold of the German atomic experts, Hahn and Heizenberg."

He was silent for a time, then suddenly said, "We must find out whether the Americans are working on the Sanger Project. I think they probably are. The bastards have already got hold of Von Braun, Lippish and any number of German experts. They seem to get away with everything, with their mountains of money. . . ."

"And how do you propose to find out if they're trying out Sanger's ideas, Comrade General?" I asked.

He smiled. "With secret police, money and lots of beautiful women at one's disposal, one can find out anything!"

I pointed out that the officials responsible for Soviet espionage in the U.S.A. and Canada had covered neither themselves nor their country with glory. I asked who Guzenko was—that Guzenko whom the Party Press had pilloried as the lowest type of humanity.

Serov dismissed Guzenko in a brief, unprintable phrase. There was another creature, he said, almost as bad, who had sold himself to the Americans—one Kravchenko. Such people were the "sum of the White Guard."

"The fact remains that we made fools of ourselves in Canada," I said.

After six hours' flight, we landed at Berlin. A host of officials had come from SVAG to meet Serov. A superb Opel-Admiral car was waiting for him, but he did not take his seat in it until it had been thoroughly searched and examined

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by an officer of the NKVD who had accompanied us from Moscow. The chauffeur was then dismissed, and the officer drove.

After reporting to SVAG, I went home. But there was no peace for me. At ten o'clock, just as I was thinking of going to bed, Serov sent for me. I went to his house, and we worked out a rough plan of action for the Commission. I was surprised to find that he appeared to repose no confidence at all in the two remaining members, Keldysh and Kishkin. "They are both damned civilians," he pointed out. "Furthermore, Kishkin has been abroad before, and Keldysh is a Yid! We shall have to keep a careful eye on them. They might slope off to the Western sector at any moment. In Berlin, it's so easy. A tram, and you're there!"

Though Serov was a Candidate Member of the Central Committee, a Deputy Minister and one of the most powerful men in the U.S.S.R., he was not above referring to anybody he did not care for as "Yiddish scum" or "blasted Jew-boy."

On this occasion, I ventured to correct him. "Excuse me, Comrade General," I said, "but your description of Keldysh smacks of anti-Semitism! As a Party member, I cannot say I admire that kind of thing!"

"Whether you admire it or not, a Yid remains a Yid!" said Serov curtly.

"But Keldysh is an Academician and Stalin Prize-winner, Comrade General," I said. "And, anyway, we all have equal rights within the Commission."

"I'm not proposing to do him or his friend any harm," he said. "But I won't have them travelling all over the country without some kind of surveillance." He 'phoned for a member of his staff, and instructed him to have Keldysh and Kishkin watched, wherever they went.

He then produced a carefully documented list of all the German scientists and technicians known still to be in the country. "Here we are," he gloated. "Here are the boys who will enable us to put paid to shopkeeper Truman in our own good time. Go through their names, and let me know which of them you consider would be most valuable to us. Make your own choice! I will have any

number you like delivered to you, ready for action, in no time! "

He outlined the process he would employ to " persuade " the scientists to work with us. It was based entirely on force and blackmail.

When I suggested that such measures would hardly produce the kind of co-operation we required, he snapped, " We do not have to study the Germans. The Germans exist for us. They must do what they're told, or take the consequences. We'll round them up like so many cattle."

The longer he talked, the more uncomfortable I became. I was determined that I would not take part in this kidnapping racket—it was nothing less—and remarked that I had received no instructions from Stalin to engage in such tactics. At this he angrily reminded me that he was a Deputy Minister and a General, whereas I was an insignificant Party member and an Engineer Lieutenant Colonel. " When I give you instructions," he said, " you will follow them! " I could not argue.

" What do you think the Allies will do when we start stealing German specialists from their zones? " I asked him.

" Devil take the Allies! " he answered. " What can they do? Arrest our agents? If they try, I'll throw them out of Berlin! "

I smiled involuntarily at his cocksureness.

" What are you laughing at? " he demanded. " I tell you I will chuck them out of the city! Or at least seal off their zones so effectively that not even a dog will be able to enter or leave them! "

" Surely that would create a great scandal, Comrade General! " I said ironically.

" Scandals can be dealt with by the diplomatists," he answered.

When, at length, I reached home, I found a group of companions and an excellent supper awaiting me. My friends were agog with curiosity about my visit to the Kremlin, to which none of them had ever been summoned personally. They plied me with questions—" How is Stalin? "—" Is he well? "—" What does he really look like at close quarters? "

## STALIN MEANS WAR

A visit to the Kremlin by a Russian is something of an extraordinary event, though foreigners seem to enter it without trouble.

I did my best to answer their rapid inquiries, but naturally I did not divulge the subject of my talks with the Ministers. My friend, Colonel Petrovich, was not to be put off by my circumspection, however. "Hedge as you will," he said, "the fact remains that you are an expert on problems of aviation. So is Keldysh, and so, in his own line, is Kishkin. Therefore, your conversations in the Kremlin must have concerned rocket planes or something similar. In short, they were just part of the war drive."

He went on to summarise some recent moves by the authorities which pointed inescapably to the fact that any officer who did not engage in methodical preparation for war faced dismissal from his post, if nothing worse. He cited the case of the Minister of Aviation Ministry himself, Colonel General Shakhurin, who had been deprived of his rank and arrested on the grounds that, under his direction, Soviet aviation factories were unlikely to produce planes of sufficient speed and performance to ensure victory against all comers by 1950. He mentioned Chief Marshal of Aviation Novikov, who had been removed from his office as Commander-in-Chief of Military Air Forces and arrested, in company with Marshal of Aviation Khudyakov and several other high ranking officers, because, between them, they had initiated defensive as opposed to aggressive training at various bases. He added that any number of naval and military officers had met a similar fate because, in the Kremlin's eyes, they were not viewing the impending conflict with sufficient urgency or even enthusiasm.

The talk became general, and somebody revealed that work on heavy landing craft, for use in the Black Sea and the Baltic, was being carried out on an enormous scale.

A General present told us of some remarks made to him recently by Vasili Stalin, the dictator's son. "Vasili is convinced," he said, "that a final and decisive blow must be struck at the decaying West, the moment its nations have completed demobilisation! His father is getting old, and, in his opinion, there's nobody else who is capable of directing the large-scale operations required."

A major spoke of the direct instructions which had been



received from the Kremlin to make conditions for the Allies in Berlin and Vienna intolerable, and so to force them to evacuate the two cities.

This was perfectly true, as I knew from my own experience. At SVAG, we were told openly and persistently that the work of the Control Commission must be sabotaged by all possible means, that the Western Allies must be deprived of any real power in Berlin, and that existence there must be made unbearable for them. Vershinin had driven the same point home to me in Moscow.

We were grouped round a large map of the world, which hung on one of the walls. The General who had spoken before said, "Vasili thinks that, before we can really strike at America with rocket bombs or any other kind of long-range weapons, we shall have to occupy—that!" He indicated an area embracing the whole of Western Europe.

Had such a conversation occurred between army officers in any country where speech is really free, it would have possessed no special significance. In such lands, even soldiers are permitted to express their own opinions, to hazard their own ideas, when they are off duty. But, in the U.S.S.R., no officer would dare for a moment to announce a personal view on any question affecting the country, among a mixed group of his fellows, unless he was already assured that it represented the Party line in every particular. Thus, there is no conceivable doubt that the thoughts vented by the senior officers gathered in my flat that night were founded directly on fact—the fact of the Kremlin's methodical preparation for launching a third world war upon mankind.

Since I shall have a good deal to say about Vasili Stalin in forthcoming chapters, a word concerning his history will not be amiss. His service career started at the Kachinsky Flying School, where he received individual instruction and was allotted a special plane of his own in which to make training flights. Despite his entire lack of common ability, he never received a bad mark. His instructors were frightened to death of him—never more so than when he took his aircraft up alone. Then they spent the time praying and shuddering, in case his ham-handed capers at the controls should cause him to crash.

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After he had graduated from the school, he lived in idleness for a considerable period, squandering an impressive total of State funds in the process. At length, he was posted to the Inspectorate of Military Air Forces, where not a few honest officials were ruined for life by his covert denunciations of their conduct. While his fellow-students at the Flying School remained Junior Lieutenants, Vasili became, in breathless succession, Major, Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel. During the war he was promoted Major General, and given command first of a Squadron, then of a Group and finally of a Wing. Ultimately he reached Berlin with the occupation force.

There he virtually commanded the Sixteenth Air Army. Its titular C.O., Colonel General Rudenko, was completely under Vasili's sway, and executed his most imbecile directions without question.

All men have their weaknesses. But Vasili Stalin's rapacious infirmities, where women, vodka, tobacco and the foulest of foul language were concerned, attained heights rarely equalled by men of his years. He behaved, upon every occasion, like a peculiarly beastly and pampered schoolboy let out into the world for the first time. His greatest crony was—and indeed still is—Serov, who played a large part in his education.

Vasili persistently refused to admit his Georgian background. "I am a Russian," he would declare, "and Georgia is an evil nest of counter-revolutionaries."

A man I knew once pointed out to him that, since his father was a Georgian, he must also belong to the race, but Vasili would not have this either. "Lenin and Stalin sprang from the great Russian people," he said severely. "And my name is Stalin—I am General Stalin!"

Vasili was notorious for his lack of tact on official occasions. When President Roosevelt's son visited the Soviet Union after the war, a grandiose reception was held at the Kremlin. During the proceedings, Vasili took foolish offence at something that was said, and remarked loudly to young Roosevelt, "I am a General, and my father's feet are in fine condition for kicking people if necessary!"

Again, when a senior officer spoke highly of the wartime work performed in the Balkans by Randolph Churchill, Vasili accepted his words as a personal insult. "This

Randolph's surname is merely Churchill, while mine is Stalin!" he said.

When he visited an airport from which, on the whim of the Kremlin, a plane was being despatched as a personal present to King Michael of Rumania, he upset the ceremony by bawling, "That's right, plaster the fellow with gifts and decorations. But warn him that it won't be long before I lead him personally to the gallows!"

In appearance, Vasili is little short of revolting. His chest is sunken, his hair a dusky red, his complexion spotty. His neck is generally festooned with carbuncles. He is short in stature, and, although his uniforms are padded thickly about the shoulders and chest, he cannot disguise the fact that he is a small and insignificant figure compared with most men. He has bad teeth, and his manners are those of the lowest kind of moujik.

Although Vasili was not even remotely concerned with any aspect of our work in Berlin, Serov proposed that he should be made a member of the Commission.

Vasili, for his part, was entranced with the idea. He pointed out that his collaboration would save us endless time and trouble—he had only to telephone his father to obtain an instant decision upon any point at issue. Keldysh and Kishkin were so terrified of Serov that they agreed at once, acclaiming the suggestion as a master stroke, and I was the only person who rejected it, on the formal grounds that the Commission had been appointed by Stalin himself. It was not our job to nominate additional members, I insisted. But Serov put up the project to Moscow where it was immediately approved.

So Vasili joined us. He was full of enthusiasm, his main notion being that we should pack V-2s with atomic bombs and launch them at America and Britain.

"One would think, Comrade General," I said, "that our only purpose in life was to kill as many people as possible."

He grinned, and patted me on the shoulder. "You know, Tokaev, the trouble with you is that you're a bit of an intellectual," he said. "Your place is not in the Red Army—it's in the Church!"

It occurred to me that, if he was not mad, I must be.

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This puppy, barking to the Kremlin's orders, had lost all vestige of human understanding. And I knew that his father and the ruffians surrounding him were equally blind to any kind of basic reality. They lived in a sick nightmare of war preparation. If somebody in the U.S.S.R. produced a new brand of soap, their first enquiry concerned its possible military significance. To them, bricks were intended only for use in building fortifications, and steel for manufacturing weapons; roads were meant only to transport troops, and men only to further the cause of war according to their abilities.

My German colleagues who worked with me in Berlin—Lange, Keune, Hilgers, Traustl, Kainat, Skubinna, Hoffe, Everling, Mayer and a number of other experts—will remember, if they ever read this, the series of discussions held in my office between April and June, 1947, with two "engineers from Moscow" dressed in mufti. They may be surprised to learn that the two "engineers" were the First Deputy Minister in charge of the M.V.D. and Vasili Stalin.

I acted both as chairman and interpreter. I well recall Serov's first meeting with Lange.

"I am delighted to meet you, Herr Lange," he said. "I am greatly interested in your work, of which Comrade Tokaev has given me some impressive details. As an engineer myself, I should be delighted to hear what you have to say about it personally."

Lange gave him a summary of his activities.

"Excellent!" said Serov. "Of course, the subject which most absorbs me is rocket development. There was a German scientist called Sanger who elaborated plans for a giant plane. What is your own opinion of his project?"

"I really don't know much about it," said Lange. "We're not allowed to work on rockets any longer. And anyway I'm an aerodynamist."

"But you're familiar with Sanger's ideas?"

"Well, I've heard of him, of course, but I've never actually worked with him."

"I think we could interest him in joining us in the Soviet Zone. Not to work on rockets, naturally, but to engage in various other spheres of research. If he's in one of the

Western Zones, the chances are that he's not permitted to work at all. But we're different. We want to give German scientists all the encouragement we can."

"All that may be true enough, but I have no idea where Sanger is at present."

"But supposing you could find out, Herr Lange?" interposed Vasili. "Would there be anything to prevent you writing to him, and asking him to come and see us? Comrade Tokaev could guarantee him special rations, financial security, a pleasant place to live in—and, of course, absolute personal freedom!"

"I don't know where he is," said Lange obstinately.

The conversation continued on these lines for some time, but Lange remained adamant. And none of the other German experts would admit to knowing Sanger's whereabouts. Serov raged and swore. "Why should they all pretend that they don't possess a shred of information about Sanger?" he asked me. "Why is it that nobody in contact with *you* will talk?"

His question indicated that he suspected some secret arrangement between the German specialists and myself. And, indeed, I discovered later that both their offices and mine were methodically and frequently searched for evidence of this by his MVD men.

"They are simply telling you the truth," I said. "They just don't know where Sanger has got to."

"Do you ever see them at your flat?" he asked.

"Occasionally—yes, Comrade General."

"Why do you have to see them there? Why not in your office? What do you discuss at these confidential meetings?"

"Our work. Nothing more. What do you suspect?"

"I suspect that the Germans are trying to fool me, and that you have instructed them to do so!" he barked. "There seems to be some pact between you!"

I told him that I should immediately report his accusation to Stalin, and demand an official investigation.

He calmed down at once. "There's no need to get excited," he said. "I was merely joking. Had I possessed any real doubts about you, I should have arranged for you to be arrested weeks ago!"

The days went by in this uneasy atmosphere, and the

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German scientific workers only reiterated their ignorance of Sanger's whereabouts. Serov roundly accused me of having told Stalin that Lange was a colleague of Sanger's.

"I said nothing of the sort, Comrade General," I replied. "I merely said that Lange had a group of German specialists under him. You have met the members of that group, and it isn't my fault if none of them can help you in tracing Sanger."

All the same, I did not like the way things were moving. Serov was perfectly capable of accusing me of the most heinous crimes in the Soviet calendar for reasons of personal malice alone. Possibly he was anxious to revenge himself on me because Stalin had reproached him in my presence. Perhaps he was consumed with fury at his own failure to discover Sanger and Tank, and was determined that I should be made a scapegoat. Whatever his basic motive, it was clear that my days as a member of the Commission were numbered if he had his way.

One morning he said, with dramatic suddenness, "Tokaev, you'll have to go to the Western Zones yourself and trace Sanger and Tank. When you've found them, you must bring them back here. I'll give you all the protection you need."

"I'm sorry, Comrade General, but I will not do it," I said. "I am a scientific worker and a soldier—not a damned spy. Arrest me if you like but I won't go to the Western Zones as a private detective and kidnapper!"

Had I not been sent to Germany on the direct orders of the Kremlin, or had Stalin himself not authorised my appointment as Deputy President of the Commission, in the presence of Serov's own particular boss, Beriya, there is little doubt that I should have been arrested there and then. As it was, Serov made no further move until the evening of April 27th, when he summoned a meeting of all members of the Commission.

As soon as we were assembled Vasili wrote a telegram to Stalin, at Serov's dictation, which declared that "owing to the stubbornness of Comrade Tokaev," the task of tracing Sanger and Tank had not yet been executed. Kishkin and Keldysh fell over each other in their boot-licking eagerness to sign the thing, and Serov and Vasili added their signatures before passing it to me. Rather naturally, I refused

to sign. "The Government sent me here to do a job," I said, "and not to put my name to nonsensical telegrams. I should get on much better if none of you were here at all!"

Vasili sprang to his feet, banging the table and yelling hysterically: "What are you saying, Tokaev? How dare you? I'm going to 'phone my father and get his permission to clap you in goal!"

Serov said, in a menacing voice, "I order you to sign that telegram."

I had to do it. But I made it clear to them that I should inform Stalin himself of the circumstances.

"You have too many teeth," said Serov quietly. "It wouldn't be a bad idea to have some of them knocked out!"

Later that evening, I tried, without avail, to reach Malenkov on the direct line to Moscow. I succeeded, however, in speaking to both Marshal Vershinin and his Deputy for the Political Section, Lieutenant General Klokov, whom I had known for a considerable time. I told each of them of my altercation with Serov and Vasili Stalin, and of the telegram I had been forced to sign. I asked them to bring the whole matter to the notice of Malenkov and Stalin himself.

Following this, I wrote a long and detailed letter to Stalin, giving my own reasons for the friction which existed within the Commission, and assuring him that, despite the difficulties I encountered, I would continue to do everything I could to carry out his commands. The letter, addressed care of Vershinin, left for Moscow by plane the next day.

Before the week was out, I was told that it had been read by Stalin, Malenkov, Voznesensky and Marshal Vasilovsky, and that the Father of Peoples had promptly directed that I should not be hindered in any way in my work. Furthermore, Malenkov had written to Serov, making it clear that I was not to be employed on jobs which were the obvious function of the MVD.

I am afraid that I took a certain advantage of this support from high quarters. Serov complained later that I became "intolerably cocky," and there is no doubt that I behaved with a freedom ill according with life beneath the Soviet regime. However, we had few quarrels.

I have already mentioned that one of the first people to bring the Sanger Project to the notice of the authorities in

the Kremlin was an engineer named Moisheev. Serov now sent for him, and he arrived in Berlin by air. At once we had a meeting.

Moisheev had no idea of the true identity of the spotty young man who continually interrupted the general discussion with fatuous remarks. Before very long, he turned to him and said, "Comrade, why do you keep breaking in with such aimless observations? You don't seem to understand the subject at issue. To put it bluntly, you're talking absolute nonsense!"

Vasili's face went white with rage. He jumped to his feet and bawled, "I am General Stalin! You have, perhaps, heard of the name? I AM GENERAL STALIN!"

The intemperate outbursts of the "Red Tsarevich," as Vasili was nicknamed, increased in number and energy as the months went by. Many were directed at me, owing to my relentless habit of refusing to undertake missions which I considered morally unacceptable. However, I was compelled, on categorical orders from Serov, to accompany Moisheev on two visits to German scientists in the Western area of Berlin.

The fact was that Serov was terrified to let him go alone, in case he should not return. Nor did he dare to send one of his own agents with him, being convinced that any member of his staff would be recognised as an official of the MVD and arrested by the "brutal Western imperialists." Therefore, he determined, I must act as Moisheev's escort, with the object of quelling any attempt the scientist might make to surrender himself to the Allied forces and ask for asylum.

In point of fact, had Moisheev exhibited any inclination to bolt during the trip, I should not have tried to restrain him for a moment!

It was perfectly evident, however, that he had not the remotest intention of trying to escape, and that Serov's suspicions were totally unfounded. But unfounded suspicions are entertained by the MVD as a matter of principle: to them, every Soviet citizen is a potential traitor and spy. In the U.S.S.R., all men are guilty until they are proved innocent—and no proof of innocence will suffice if the MVD cares to reject it.



## STALIN'S SON VASILI

Moisheev was not alone in being suspected of harbouring a wish to defect to the Allies. I, myself, was watched continually, wherever I went. I discovered this partly through my own observation and partly through being tipped off by some of the very people who were set to dog my footsteps. (Not all agents employed by the MVD are lost to human decency—particularly those enrolled against their own will.)

What point there was in having me watched, I was quite unable to fathom. Had I wished to bolt, I could have done so months previously. I had worked in the Allied Control Council, which was located in Berlin's American sector, and had mixed with Allied representatives daily. I had been free to move wherever my duties might lead me; a special pass fixed to the windscreen of my car had opened all barriers for me.

As I had not sought to take any advantage of these facilities for desertion, it might have been presumed that I did not, in fact, plan to escape. And, in any event, I had been screened so thoroughly before being sent to Berlin in the first place that the authorities could have had no reasonable doubts of my loyalty. Again, Stalin himself had appointed me Deputy President of the Commission headed by Serov.

I mention these facts simply because, at that time, I had no thought in the world of attempting to break through the strangling net of Soviet rule. Whatever my private feelings, I was fully determined to carry on with my job.

Nevertheless, it was obvious that Serov and Vasili were at least partly convinced that I was trying to sabotage their plans to conscript Sanger. The most foolish feature of the whole affair was their naive conviction that they had only to deliver the German scientist to Moscow for him to start turning out enormous aircraft capable of dropping atomic bombs on New York and London. I knew well enough that years of work would be necessary before Sanger's giant plane could be manufactured, even if it proved to be a practical, as opposed to a merely theoretical proposition.

Thus, since I was certain that no immediate results could spring from Sanger's enrolment, there would have been no purpose in my attempting to forestall it. And, in fact, I was fully as eager as were Serov and Vasili to obtain his services, because of the benefit his knowledge could bring to

our own scientific experts, who, as I have already stated, were far below his level of ability.

As things turned out, Sanger was never "captured" for work in the U.S.S.R. Vasili and Serov, by the very vehemence of their demands for news of him and their indiscreet inquiries about him among all classes of Germans, must successfully have warned him that the Russians were after him. His prudent reaction—wherever he might have been—was to steer well clear of all Soviet agents and keep his identity dark.

In pursuance of their efforts to discover some evidence against me, the two "engineers from Moscow" made a point of holding private meetings with Skubinna, Keune, Kainst and other members of Lange's group after they had visited me at my flat, in order to question them on the subjects discussed. For some reason, particular attention was paid to my association with Skubinna, whom I occasionally saw in his own house. Once, when I had spent an evening with this scientist and his family, Serov himself was waiting outside to follow me home! I found it hard to believe that the Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs of the U.S.S.R. could descend to such depths of idiocy, but there he was, and his car kept mine in view all the way to my flat.

He essayed another familiar gambit to trap me. One day, a beautiful German woman called at my flat, and, with equal haste and amiability, offered to become my mistress. I rejected the suggestion and showed her out, wondering that even Serov should consider me fool enough to fall for this kind of device.

Bit by bit, I built up for myself a reputation for conscientious loyalty to the Party which even the MVD could not shake, though heaven knows they tried their best to incriminate me. The confidence which they were bound, at length, to repose in me stood me in excellent stead at a later date.

One morning, Serov and Vasili were told in my presence that the famous German rocket expert, Professor Wagner, had returned from a trip to America and was living somewhere near Göttingen, in the British Zone. Vasili's eyes glinted. "Well, Comrades, now is our chance!" he said as soon as we were alone. "We must get hold of Wagner

without delay—it will be a pleasant surprise for my father!”

As usual, I pointed out that the kidnapping of major scientists from Allied sectors could not be performed without grave risk of international incidents. But Serov and Vasili were deaf to all objections. Wagner, they gloated, would be an even greater prize than Sanger, for he could provide direct information concerning secret work on rocket construction in the U.S.A.

Excitedly, they planned to send Wagner back to America as a Russian agent, despite the fact that they had never as yet set eyes upon the man. Serov issued rapid instructions to his spy-nest to discover exactly where the German Professor was staying, to submit a sketch-map showing the most discreet approaches to the house, and to give particulars of the manner (if any) in which he was guarded. These details arrived the next day.

Vasili undertook the task of kidnapping Wagner. He departed to the zonal border with a German named Oksen, who had been well supplied with money and false documents. Serov had already given instructions that Oksen was to be permitted to leave and re-enter the Soviet Zone without hindrance: he had also taken the further precaution of arranging for the German to be followed, throughout his travels, by secret agents. Oksen, who was authorised to make various propositions to Wagner, or, if the scientist proved obdurate, to lure him to some spot in which he could be kidnapped without undue fuss, left Vasili at the border. Time passed, and eventually Oksen returned—alone. The “Red Tsarevich” raved hysterically, threatening—though, for some unaccountable reason, failing—to have Oksen shot.

Serov instructed his agents that Wagner must not be permitted, in any circumstances, to return to the U.S.A. If he could not be persuaded or compelled to cross into the Soviet Zone, he must meet with an accident.

Disgusted by these manœuvres, I sent a long letter to Malenkov, requesting that I might be released from working under Serov. Soon after this—probably as a result of a telephone call from the Kremlin—the Deputy Minister said he wished to have a heart-to-heart talk with me. Why, he asked somewhat plaintively, was I being so difficult?

I expressed my feelings to him quite frankly. “All I

want," I said, "is to get on with the job I was sent here to do. No good can come of these terrorist side-lines of yours! If German scientists want to work with us, all well and good—let them. But I can't agree, and never shall agree, to scientific workers being kidnapped and forced to work for us against their will. Furthermore, I strongly object to being involved in projects which have nothing whatever to do with my own profession. As I've told you before, I am a scientist and not a spy! As a Party member, it is my obligation to further the highest ideals of Socialism. The Central Committee—of which you, Comrade General, are a Candidate Member—has always laid it down that Party members should uphold truth and humanitarianism. I feel that it is my duty to follow those principles implicitly. I should never wish any action of mine to bring shame on the Central Committee. As a Red Army Officer, I am subordinate to you, and must follow any instructions you care to give me. But, as Deputy President of the Government Commission of which you are President, we stand on a rather different footing. And, in matters affecting the Commission's work, I must ask you to pay more attention to my opinions. After all, I was really responsible for the Commission's creation. All I am trying to do is to carry out the work assigned to it."

Oddly enough, Serov took all this quite calmly. He did not attempt to shout me down, nor did he utter the customary threats to have me arrested, exiled or shot. His behaviour was so mild, indeed, that I could not help feeling a slight suspicion—one I had experienced on certain previous occasions with him—that he was secretly mixed up in some kind of plot against Stalin, and would sooner or later make overtures to me to join him in the conspiracy. As things turned out, I never discovered whether my doubts on this score were justified or not.

Whatever he may have thought of my comments, they certainly did not deter him in his efforts to enrol German scientists to work for us. His latest potential capture was the famous Professor Ludwig Prandtle, who was regarded by most aerodynamists as the real father of modern aviation, and who, like Wagner, was reputed to be living in Göttingen. Vasili at once suggested that Prandtle should be kidnapped: nothing, he said, would please his father more.

I pointed out that the scientist was an old and ailing man, and that the brilliant work he had done in the past entitled him to be left in peace.

Nobody listened to me. Vasili telephoned the Kremlin, and obtained Stalin's blessing for a wild project he had of making a sort of mass raid on Göttingen and roping in Prandtle, Wagner and any other scientific experts who happened to reside there.

"The whole thing is crazy," I said. "Prandtle is far too ill to be of the slightest use to us."

"Nonsense!" said Vasili. "If father thinks it is worth our while to kidnap the fellow, there it is—there's nothing more to be said. If he's too old and sick for work, we'll simply get him to sign a statement urging all his pupils to join our ranks. That will prove of enormous benefit to us."

I warned them that any attempt to remove Prandtle from the British Zone against his will would produce a torrent of public disapproval, and result probably in an official protest from the British authorities.

Vasili spoke unprintably of the British for several minutes, then came up to me, with his hands in his pockets, and said, "What do I care about official protests? You're just a damned Liberal, with the fuss you make about such things. There will be plenty of time for Britain to squeal when we've socked her on her venerable jaw. Remember, to the Red Army, the seas are only knee-deep!"

Through a series of circumstances which it would take too long to recount, Serov and Vasili failed completely in their efforts to obtain the services of Prandtle, Wagner or, indeed, of any other German scientists of high standing in the Allied Zones. As usual, they over-reached themselves, and ruined their own cause by their blustering methods.

In May, 1947, a young German engineer called Duschat came to see me. He conversed volubly—though extremely little that he said was really worth saying—and gave every impression of being a master of bluff.

He expressed a strong desire to do some practical work for us, and finally, at my suggestion, produced some notes on supersonic aircraft. They were such rubbish that I put them away in a file without further ado.

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In some way, General Aleksandrov, Chief of SVAG's Military Air Department, came to hear of this, and immediately issued a series of official denunciations of my conduct, declaring that I was an "evil saboteur" who sought to cover up the brilliant theories of German specialists before they could be utilised by the U.S.S.R!

Since such reports presented a grave risk of my being shot as a common criminal, I meekly withdrew Duschat's notes from the file and sent copies of them to Malenkov, Khrushchev and Vershinin. Thereupon a storm of abuse descended upon my head from the Kremlin for wasting the Ministers' time with pages of nonsense! I was commanded to fly to Moscow, and account for my extraordinary behaviour. In the treacherous quicksand of life beneath a Communist regime, such incidents are commonplace; when almost every official is basically malevolent, one often gets into greater trouble by obeying instructions than through ignoring them.

In Moscow, I was received and severely rebuked by General Odintsov. "Can't you understand," he asked, "that we want some real results quickly? We want blue-prints for rocket planes and projectiles in advance of any which have been proposed so far. The Americans are experimenting with machines which can fly incredible distances, and we're still fiddling about with the rocket bombs Hitler had in 1944. What's going to happen to us if the Kremlin rules that war shall break out tomorrow? I tell you we have nothing, nothing. . . ." He spoke like a man who was scheduled to open a restaurant and lacked any provisions to cook. He was feverish at the thought that our arms production lagged so monstrously behind Stalin's urge to launch a new war upon the world.

A friend who met me on my return to Berlin gave me some more disquieting tidings. "The Russian sixth of the world has gone finally and irretrievably mad," he said. "Have you heard the latest? The whole police system in the Soviet Zone is to be recognised. A special section of the new S.E.D. Party school at Koenigswusterhausen is to be devoted to the training of Commissars. Germany is becoming Balkanised, my friend! "

"And what about the Allies? There are quite a few of their people in Berlin! "

“ Yes, but we have direct orders to make life so impossible for them that they'll have to go ! ”

Thus the Kremlin propagated its “ peace campaign ” among its own people !

The work of our Commission grew steadily more involved, and my own time became increasingly occupied. Suddenly, the name of Sanger cropped up again. Serov's agents reported that he had been glimpsed in Vienna, and the Deputy Minister hurried there in his personal plane.

A vast scheme was set afoot to contact Sanger by letter. An agent was to write to somebody in Austria, who would correspond with a friend in the French Zone, who again would write to a link in Paris, who would communicate direct with Sanger, offering him anything he desired on earth if he would only agree to go and work in Moscow. But, in some mysterious manner, this chain-letter misfired and, instead of being delivered to Sanger, returned to Serov !

Then there was a German scientist named Busemann, who was alleged to have been located in London. “ Inform Comrade Zarubin and Comrade Samarin at once,” commanded Serov. “ They will take the necessary steps ! ” What steps were taken by Comrades Zarubin and Samarin, I never discovered, but Busemann, like Sanger, failed to appear.

As part of my job, I contacted a number of ex-enemy scientists in Thuringen, Saxony, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg, and made formal proposals to each of them that they should work for the Soviet Union. In no case, however, did I attempt to use any coercion, and the consequence was that my “ bag ” was depressingly small.

After some time, Serov, Vasili, Keldysh and Kishkin set off in a bunch to Moscow, to interrogate various German specialists who had been lured or forcibly transported there, by devious means, in the early days of the occupation. Thus, I was left with the whole of the Commission's labours on my shoulders, but my sense of relief at the absence of my fellow-members was so great that the fact hardly worried me.

I was, however, worked almost to death when a further Commission was instituted by SVAG to deal solely with

problems of reactive technology. I was appointed as its President, while my Deputy was the Major General Aleksandrov who had blackguarded me in secret reports for filing Duschat's ridiculous notes, and who, incidentally, did not know a rocket from a steam engine. The third member, Lieutenant Colonel Korobkov, Chief of SVAG's Directorate of Science, was already quite overwhelmed with work, so the bulk of this Commission's exertions, too, fell on me.

I had many encounters with an ageing but still most competent German inventor named Duchense. One day, he came to me with some elaborate plans for the mechanisation of building work. I knew well enough how acute was the housing problem in Russia, and considered his proposals with some enthusiasm. I was quite certain that the Government would share my views, and accordingly despatched Duchense's notes and diagrams to Moscow.

A few days later I received a telegram:—

"For Comrade Tokaev. Duchense plans have nothing to do with reactive technology, nor do they possess any military significance. They do not interest us."

I am not given to swearing, but I must admit that, when I received this thing, I cried aloud that the Government was made up of a rabble of bastards. Their complete indifference to the real needs of the Soviet people sickened and shocked me. They knew that the bulk of the population were living in overcrowded barracks of houses, or else in mud huts. They knew that the invading Nazis had razed villages and towns to the ground, and that reconstruction was the crying need of the country. They knew that funds, supplies and manpower for building were alike becoming scarcer every day. Yet they turned down plans for easing the situation, on the mere grounds that they lacked "military significance."

I could not let the matter drop altogether, and wrote to Lieutenant General Makarov, Political Deputy to the Chief of Staff of SVAG, urging him to put Duchense's ideas before the Central Committee of the Party. He merely replied, "Rockets are of greater importance than building. We can look after homes for the people when all danger of foreign intervention in the affairs of the U.S.S.R. has been overcome!"



A similar instance of official unconcern for the people's needs occurred when a German engineer submitted a blueprint of a mechanical street cleaner to me. I put it before General Barinov.

"What can we possibly want with a thing like this?" he asked. "We have lived without it for hundreds of years, and we'll go on living without it. But we simply cannot get on without rocket planes!"

The group of German scientists headed by Doctor Lange were continually experimenting on various types of aircraft. Among the ideas Lange put up to me was one for a rocket plane which, he confidently alleged, would be capable of flying at speeds ranging between 1,800 and 2,000 miles per hour for distances of anything up to 7,500 miles, at an altitude of 250,000 feet!

The whole thing sounded crazy to me, and I heartily dreaded the consequences if the Kremlin tyrants ever succeeded in obtaining planes of this calibre. Nevertheless, I allowed Lange to go ahead, and presented his plans to General Aleksandrov, who at once insisted that full details of them must be despatched to Moscow.

An exultant reply was received from the Kremlin. Unlimited funds were put at our disposal, and, every day, we had messages urging us to speed the new development. I was endowed with extra authority, to ensure that nothing should stand in the way of the fantastic project.

"When this plane has been constructed," Aleksandrov gloated, "Comrade Stalin will probably make us Heroes of Soviet Labour."

"Or else have us shot!" I said gloomily.

"Why?" he asked, startled.

"Because the thing could never do all that Lange claims for it."

"You doubt the success of the venture before we've properly started upon it?"

"Yes," I said. "In my opinion, the plans should never have been sent to Moscow. At this stage of the world's scientific knowledge, nobody on earth could make such a plane. Lange is simply trying to run before he can walk. It may even be that the whole affair is a put-up job, schemed by foreign intelligence."

Aleksandrov gave me the appalled look of the typical

Soviet ignoramus who had attained a high position, not through his own capabilities, but simply through an innate capacity to roar: "Long live our Leader!" louder than most people. He hurried away to denounce me, once again, to the Party authorities. "Comrade Tokaev's attitude," he wrote, "does not conform with the interests of the Fatherland!"

My forebodings, however, were amply justified by the decreasing success which attended Lange's experiments.

All the same, the Kremlin continued to pour out money to back the scheme, while more worth-while projects were left entirely unsupported. A skilled Soviet engineer named Baryshev, for instance, who was working on problems of purely civil interest, was not given a penny to help him. When Kutsevalov, at my behest, sent a telegram to Moscow asking for funds to aid his work, the curt reply came, "Civil aviation does not interest us!"

Similarly, my German scientist friend, Doctor Skubinna, was refused payment of his salary because he happened to be engaged on non-military work!

Another German, Professor Hoffe, produced a scheme affecting the observation of rockets in flight. We advised Moscow, and instantly received a reply approving large expenditure on the project. But, when experts had decided that Hoffe's apparatus, though useful in many aeronautical fields, would not directly benefit any sphere of rocket warfare, the Kremlin at once withdrew its financial support. I could not legally raise a thousand marks for the man.

## CHAPTER V

### Kidnapping German scientists

SEROV and Vasili Stalin remained in Moscow. No trace had been found of Sanger, and I heard that the Politbureau were becoming wrathful. Malenkov and Voznesensky, I was told on good authority, were inclined to blame me for the fact that the German scientist's wonder-plane had not materialised on Soviet airfields. Stalin, however, ruled that I should be allowed to continue my work in Berlin, and, apparently, was by no means displeased with my efforts.

Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, I received a new assignment from him.

The circumstances were mysterious, and I do not know to this day just what inspired them. However, they led directly to my eventual decision to escape from the Soviet orbit, and are therefore worth describing in some detail.

When I look back, I see that the whole train of events was really set in motion by a telephone call I received at my flat in July, 1947. The voice was that of a German woman, who tried, in an expertly feminine manner, to persuade me to meet her. I had no idea who might be listening on the line, and hastened to tell her that I was not in the habit of keeping clandestine appointments. I added that, if she wished to see me on any official business, she could call at my office.

The next day I happened to visit the library of Berlin University. I had not been there long before an attractive and extremely well dressed young woman walked up to me and claimed my acquaintance. I assured her that I did not know her: she insisted that I did. I had, she said, given her a lift in my car on the Dresden-Berlin road, some time in 1945. She explained that, on the occasion concerned, she had looked travel-stained and poorly dressed—that, she hinted, was why I failed to recognise her now. She gave me an exact description of my car, to impress me with the fact that she must have travelled in it.

I told her that I was in a hurry to go to Potsdam, and she

at once suggested coming with me. Somewhat unwillingly, I agreed. We had no sooner passed beyond the boundaries of the city than she produced a photograph from her hand-bag.

"Do you know who that is?" she asked.

I looked at the snapshot idly. Its subject was Doctor Kurt Tank!

I stopped the car. "What exactly is your game?" I demanded.

She smiled at me demurely. "I know you are looking for this man, and I want to help you—that's all," she said.

"I'm not looking for anybody" I said. "It's very kind of you to offer me your help, but, honestly, I don't need it." I held open the door of the car, and made her alight, then drove straight to the MVD headquarters. Here I gave a full report of the curious incident, and asked that my car's registration number, my telephone number and the number of my personal pass should be altered at once, since the first two, at any rate, appeared to be known in undesirable quarters. The MVD arranged for all this to be done, but made no comment on my report. Later, I learned that the lady was one of their agents!

I never discovered precisely why they had staged this odd charade. It was not wise to enquire—though clearly they had been trying to trap me in some manner.

A few days later, I was informed that Professor Tank had been definitely located in the British Zone, somewhere near Hanover, and that immediate steps must be taken to contact him. I gave the matter a great deal of thought, and finally wrote Tank a personal letter, in long-hand. I said:

"Dear Professor Tank,

I should be grateful for an opportunity of meeting you, in order to discuss the possibility of your engaging in scientific work in the U.S.S.R., or alternatively, in Germany, in the interests of the Soviet Union. You once expressed your willingness to work for us, but, for various reasons, the question was not pursued at that particular juncture.

I should like to give you an unqualified assurance that I shall make no attempt to apply any kind of coercion at our meeting, if it is held. You will be

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treated in every way as a completely free agent, and, if the proposals I have to put before you fail to interest you, I will guarantee your return home unmolested.

The date, time and place of our meeting, I leave unreservedly to you."

It was suggested that this letter should be transmitted through the MVD, but I insisted that it should go via open mail from SVAG, and, furthermore, that it should be addressed to the scientist care of the British Section of the Control Council. I was determined that the whole affair should be quite above-board, and that no questionable tactics should be adopted in any phase of it.

Typically enough, the authorities agreed on the surface with everything that I said: and then made instant covert arrangements for the letter to be passed to the MVD and handed to Tank personally by the lady who had waylaid me in the University Library. Just as typically, it was never delivered at all!

About a fortnight after I had written to Tank, the Passes Bureau 'phoned me to say that a visitor, who insisted on seeing Lieutenant General Kutsevalov and nobody else, had arrived from Western Germany. Kutsevalov, however, had by then been dismissed and posted back to Moscow. His place had been taken by Major General Aleksandrov, who was in constant terror of encountering people from the Western Zones in case he should be accused of plotting with them against the Soviet Government. I was therefore deputed to receive the new arrival.

His name, he told me, was Alfred Schlange, and I recognised the familiar technique as soon as he spoke—"I am a representative of Professor Tank!" he said.

At once I got rid of him, and reported that he was a spy. To my astonishment, he returned with a letter indubitably written by Tank, in which the scientist expressed a wish to meet Soviet officials in order to explore the possibilities of working in the Eastern Zone, or even in Moscow.

This seemed, on the face of it, to be just what the authorities wanted, but the only immediate consequence was a vast extension of the suspicions held against me. My already substantial corps of attendant shadows was increased by two specially distinguished sleuths—Colonel Klykov,

MVD chief for the Province of Brandenburg, and Lieutenant Colonel Sitnov, the head MVD official in Berlin. Klykov wore uniform; Sitnov was in mufti.

Sitnov came to see me in my flat and revealed himself as a quietly spoken, well mannered and cultured individual. Methodically, he made me go through the whole history of my personal interest in Professor Tank, culminating in my interview with Schlange. He was by far the cleverest representative of the MVD I had ever encountered; Serov, in comparison, was a ranting fool.

Not only did Sitnov worm every fact he needed from me, with the utmost ease—he made me forget my fear of being interrogated. His methods were deadly. I felt as though he had turned my very soul inside-out. Fortunately, I had nothing to hide on the subject of Tank, and my conscience was clear.

Klykov, who called on me in his turn, was a totally different proposition.

“ Now! ” he said.

“ Now what, Comrade Colonel? ” I asked.

He looked me up and down, staring with particular contempt at my epaulettes, which betrayed that my rank was inferior to his own.

“ Where’s your friend, Schlange? ” he barked.

“ Are you speaking to me? ” I asked.

“ Who the hell else should I be speaking to? ”

“ May I point out, Comrade Colonel, that I possess both a name and a military rank? ” I said coldly.

“ Don’t talk damned nonsense! Where’s this contact of yours from the Western Zone? ”

“ As a matter of fact, he’s in the dining-room.”

“ So you not only receive spies in your office—you feed them in your flat! Bring him here! ”

Schlange appeared, and Klykov proceeded to interrogate him, alternately bawling and threatening. He made it clear that, despite the apparently genuine letters from Tank, he was quite convinced that the German was a spy in the pay of the British. Schlange, for his part, lost his temper, and said in a loud voice, “ I do not know who you are, Herr Colonel, and I have no wish to talk to you. I came here to see Herr Tokaev, and I won’t speak to anyone else! ”

" Indeed? " said Klykov, and leered at me suspiciously. " You evidently have a close understanding together."

To irritate him, I telephoned Moscow on the direct line, and asked to be connected to Serov's office. Captain Nikitin answered.

" Ah, Nikitin," I said, " I have an extremely odd Colonel with me who claims to be something to do with your department. I just want to check his credentials! "

Klykov sprang at the receiver and wrenched it from my hand. " I am not an extremely odd Colonel," he roared. " I am Colonel Klykov! "

The horrified Nikitin assured me that my visitor was one of the most important representatives of the MVD then in Germany, and I affected to be fully satisfied.

Klykov took his leave, not very well pleased, and an exhaustive report concerning Schlange was sent to the Kremlin. To the astonishment of a great many people, Stalin ruled that I should be personally entrusted with the job of contacting Tank, and should be permitted to take whatever steps I might consider necessary for the purpose.

Hard on the heels of these instructions, Serov arrived by air. We held an immediate conference with Dratvin, First Deputy Chief of SVAG. Serov handed me my official directive to concentrate on " capturing " Tank to the exclusion of all other interests—even the long-standing pursuit of Sanger. " Nobody will interfere with your actions or seek to impede you," he told me acidly, " but, remember, Comrade Stalin relies upon you to produce results."

He telephoned some of the key-men in his spy-ring on the spot, instructing them to give me every assistance in their power, and to see that no difficulties were placed in my way.

Here was impressive proof of my good standing with the Kremlin. I could not avoid a feeling of slight satisfaction.

The following day, I attended another meeting at SVAG, at which were present the Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Lukyanchanko; the principal of SVAG's MVD section, Major General Malkov; an MGB representative, whose name I did not discover, and the head of the Commandant's Directorate, Major General Gorokhov. The conference was held in Dratvin's office, and he opened the proceedings by underlining the importance ascribed by Marshal Vasilevsky

to the acquisition of Tank. He then enlarged upon the fact that the funds which might be expended on the task were unlimited. It was, he emphasised, unthinkable that Tank should be allowed to work for the British!

Lukyanchenko made the point that foreign intelligence agents might well seek to "acquire" *me*, if only to discover the reason for the Soviet Government's interest in Tank. He suggested that, in order to divert any unwelcome attentions from myself, an initial meeting with the German Professor should be organised by "General Kovalchuk's people" (the MVD), and that I should stay very much in the background during the early stages. Furthermore, he urged, I should cease to go about publicly in Berlin without an escort, and should refrain from visiting theatres, restaurants or other places where I might be "approached."

For some reason best known to themselves, the MVD representatives present refused to countenance this suggestion, and pointed to the fact that the Moscow directive laid down that I must be allowed to work in absolute freedom.

Thereupon, the conference switched to the other extreme, and decided that I must get in touch with Tank without the aid of the MVD or any other source. This, they declared, would add to the scientist's confidence, and lull him into acceptance of whatever proposals I considered myself empowered to make to him. Owing to my constant communication with various German specialists, in the course of my job, there was little doubt that Tank would know me by name, they pointed out; and I increased their gratification on this score by mentioning that I had met him personally in Moscow in 1940, when he had visited the Academy as a member of a delegation of German aviators.

I was assured of MVD protection and help on any occasions when I might specially need them.

On July 23rd, 1947, I left with Schlange for Wittenberge, his home town. I visited the Soviet Military Komandatura, and was greeted by the Chief of Police with the news that my travelling companion faced instant arrest for having made away with public funds! At once I consulted my superiors in Berlin. I had no desire to embark on any kind of project with a common criminal, and, indeed, it seemed



disgraceful to me that such a man should be involved in a special assignment for Stalin.

Berlin, however, replied with some irritability that Schlange must not be arrested in any circumstances, even if he were proved to be not only a thief but a three-fold murderer. The Kremlin wanted Tank, and if Schlange could help in obtaining his services, no trifling question of unappeased justice must be permitted to hinder his co-operation.

I asked the MVD Chief of Wittenberge, one Gritsenko, at least to hasten Schlange's trial as much as possible. But he knew of the circumstances already, and simply told me that nothing would be done until the Tank business had been settled satisfactorily.

"But it looks as though the man is a liar and a villain," I said.

"Why should I care what he is?" he returned. "All I know is that the Politbureau want him to do a special job for them."

I met with a similar reaction from Comrade Popovich, MVD Chief in Perelberg, who added the illuminating comment, "Thieves and prostitutes are frequently most valuable in carrying out the designs of the Central Committee!"

Baffled, I made such personal inquiries as I could into Schlange's case, and swiftly reached the conclusion that the charge against him was, in fact, completely unjustified. As far as I could gather, the man was no more a thief than I was. Accordingly, I arranged for him to proceed to Tank's home town, with a request that the scientist should meet me, at some convenient point, in three days' time.

Having some time to spare, I made my way to Schwerin, where I was unfortunate enough to meet Colonel Voronov, one of the most unpleasant products of Communist bureaucracy. He insisted that I should accompany him to his home, where he placed a map of the world before me, and proceeded to prod its surface with his pencil. "As soon as we have suitable rocket planes and landing craft, we can grab the Scandinavian countries," he said, jabbing away at Norway's rugged coast-line. "We shall plant a dagger in the decayed breast of degenerated Sweden!" he gloated. "Only then shall we be safe against the Americans and the

British. At present, they threaten us, every hour of the day."

I had heard all this so many times before. The Party bosses always considered that they were threatened from somewhere. As far back as 1939, there had been a whole catalogue of cities which, in their eyes, had been imperilled by other centres—Odessa by Bucharest, Zhitomir by Lvov, Minsk by Warsaw, Vitebak by Kovno, Pskov by Riga, Leningrad by Tallin and Vipuri. And, now that the war was over, and the Communist net had spread in choking coils across Eastern Europe, Sofia was menaced by Athens, Belgrade by Rome, Leipzig by Kassel, Schmerin by Hamburg, Stettin by Copenhagen, the Baltic States by Sweden, Viborg by Helsinki! If Paris became Russia's, it would at once be threatened by London, and so on; safety would come only when the whole world belonged to the U.S.S.R. "Until Moscow becomes the earth's geographical centre," said Voronov solemnly, "we must live with our bayonets pointing towards the West!"

He had a notion that Europeans had existed for far too long in comparative luxury. "They must live in our hovels," he declaimed, "while we reside in their mansions. That will enable us to understand each other better!" Furthermore, he declared, Soviet blood must become mixed with European. "I look forward to the day," he cried, "when no German woman will be quite certain whether to call her eldest son Ivan or Hans!" And he went on to speak, in the foulest terms, of Western women in general.

I waited for some days for Schlange to return from the British Zone, and, on the morning of July 27th, received a message that he had gone straight to Berlin. I hurried after him, and was appalled to learn that Tank had left on a trip to London before he had been able to make contact with him.

The news spread rapidly through the upper regions of SVAG. Every high official I met greeted me with the ominous word, "*Well. . . . ?*" Some openly suggested that Schlange and I had plotted together to secure Tank's escape to England, and that I sought to sabotage Stalin's long-term plans by dissuading German scientists from working for us.

It swiftly transpired, however, that Tank and I had been carefully watched by MVD men throughout the whole course of our trip, and they could conclusively testify that Tank's journey to London had nothing in the world to do with either of us. Malenkov was informed accordingly, and he at once replied that Comrade Tokaev must continue to hunt his quarry despite the present setback.

I decided to send Schlange once more to the British Zone, to await Tank's return. He set off for Schauenburg, where the scientist had been residing, with instructions to report back to Berlin if he did not make an appearance within a given period. The scheduled interval passed, and Schlange came trotting back to the capital with another confession of failure—Tank had remained in London, and there was no news of him.

To my surprise—and somewhat to my alarm—the MVD chiefs had no fault to find with Schlange on this occasion. On the contrary, they treated him with every consideration. When these birds of prey show politeness to anyone, it is usually a convincing omen that his arrest is near, and I warned Schlange, as frankly as I dared, to be on his guard.

In due course, since no move was made against him, I sent him off for the third time to contact Tank. One of my assistants accompanied him, and I arranged for them both to fly to Perelberg, fearing that, if they went overland, Schlange might be arrested on the way. The idea, as before, was that he should arrange a meeting between Tank and myself as soon as it proved practicable.

Once more he came back without news of the missing scientist. And, unfortunately, his first action on reaching Berlin was to visit me at my flat. This fact was duly noted by the inevitable knot of spies who watched the house, and a whirlwind of suspicion against me blustered through the corridors of SVAG. My life was made wretched by rumours and gossip; my closest colleagues would have nothing to do with me; I was even barred from meetings of the Party.

I telephoned Serov, and was told by his A.D.C. that "the boss" had decided to release me from all work in connection with Tank. The next day, I was officially informed of this decision by General Dratvin. I expected to be arrested at any moment, and spent my days in silent apprehension.

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On General Melnikov's orders, Schlange was despatched back to Wittenberge, and, soon after this, I was ordered to report to Melnikov's office in the M.G.B. Directorate. I did so, and was interrogated at enormous length, but without the customary chorus of snarls and threats.

Within a few days, however, I was bundled into a car, and driven at furious speed to the MVD headquarters, Brandenburg Province; the offices were situated in a vast prison surrounded by a high, broken-glass-topped wall. Here I was shown into Colonel Klykov's room.

Klykov was accompanied by an official acting in the capacity of Prosecutor.

"So here you are, in prison!" the good Colonel began comfortingly. He went on to make some elephantine witticisms concerning the plight in which I, "Stalin's special emissary," now found myself. He then informed me that Schlange had been arrested, on his way to Wittenberge, and was confined in this very gaol.

The Prosecutor opened a file, and produced my letter to Tank, a photograph of the scientist and one of Schlange. He proceeded to ask me the routine farrago of questions. I answered them all quite frankly; after all, I had nothing to hide. Suddenly he whipped out Schlange's notebook, which contained some references to Kutsevalov, Aleksandrov, Colonel Tyulpanov and myself. None of them was particularly incriminating, however, and the Prosecutor went on to refer darkly to certain "sensational revelations" which the Western German had made verbally. At once, I asked that he should be sent for, so that he might repeat his allegations in my presence. This request was refused. "In a day or two," said Klykov, "we are going to have Schlange shot. No doubt he will divulge a good deal more before he dies."

Then they sent me home, to "think things over."

To add to my troubles, Schlange's wife arrived in Berlin the next morning, and tried, in a theatrically mysterious manner, to contact me. The MVD men were bursting with suspicion; once again, I was hauled off to the Brandenburg gaol for ruthless interrogation. Eventually, however, even Klykov was compelled to admit that no real evidence could be produced against me.

Thereupon I took the risk of writing a long letter of com-

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plaint to Moscow, detailing the false charges levied against me, and describing the insulting grilling to which I had, quite needlessly, been subjected. I advanced the frank opinion that the whole prospect of obtaining Tank's services had been endangered by Schlange's arrest, and requested my personal release from all work in Germany.

Back came a reply, assuring me that the authorities held nothing at all against me, but insisting that I should continue to work in Berlin. It was agreed, though, that I should be granted special leave, and I set off, in much relief, to a rest-house for senior SVAG officials in Woltersdorf.

I had been at the rest-house for little more than a fortnight when I received an urgent recall to SVAG headquarters. The last thing in the world I expected was that I should be ordered to resume work on the Tank case, but in fact this was precisely what occurred.

It seemed that, during my absence, things had been moving. S.E.D. headquarters had been approached by two Germans from the British Zone; Hermann Hiel and Paul Dusterdiek, who had asked to be put in touch with SVAG. The S.E.D. officials, delighted at the opportunity of gratifying their Soviet masters, had sent them post-haste to see General Aleksandrov, who, in his usual terror of being accused of relations with spies, had breathlessly informed the MVD of the circumstances.

Since the two visitors apparently had some tidings of Tank, a full report of their arrival was sent to Moscow. Back came instant instructions that I must be recalled from leave, to interrogate them.

I saw them, and, to my great surprise, they handed me a personal letter from Tank to Stalin. They could, they said, easily arrange a meeting between the German scientist and myself, and would willingly do so—on one condition.

When I asked what this was, they told me a curious story. It seemed that Tank himself had been in Berlin in 1946, accompanied by Hiel's son, and had held various discussions with Kutsevalov. (It must have been then, I reflected, that Kutsevalov had rejected the offer of Tank's services, on the grounds that he had once been a registered Nazi.) Following these conversations, the scientist had left

for the British Zone, but young Hiel had remained behind in Berlin—only to be arrested by the Russian authorities in company with a friend of his, Doctor Richart. Since that time, nothing had been heard of either the young man or his companion.

Hermann Hiel and Dusterdiek now stipulated that they should be given full details of the prisoners' fate before they advanced any information concerning Tank. It appeared that Hiel senior had agreed to represent Tank in Berlin solely in the hope of gaining some news regarding his son.

I put the facts before Serov, Dratvin and Melnikov, and was solemnly assured by each and all of them that both young Hiel and Richart would be released immediately Tank arrived in Berlin. At that time, though I might have known better, I was still naive enough to accept a promise pledged by three Soviet Generals. Accordingly, I gave an unreserved guarantee to Hermann Hiel that he would be reunited with his son as soon as Tank had reached the capital.

On this basis, arrangements were made for me to contact the scientist in Oebisfelde. Before I left for this rendezvous, I asked particularly that I should not be encumbered by a lot of secret policemen, watching every step that I took. Busybody Klykov, however, decided to keep a personal eye upon me. He installed himself in the house where I lodged in Oebisfelde, and followed me everywhere I went, including the lavatory.

I told him, in the roundest terms, that I should feel a hundred times better without him. He answered, with an unpleasant smirk, "German women have often said the same thing to me!"

"But what's the point of interfering with all my plans in this way?"

"Police officials do not have to account for their actions," he said.

News came that Tank would reach the zonal border on a certain date. Klykov, accompanied by a circus of MVD men, set off to meet him. I was not allowed to leave Oebisfelde ("in case I should be kidnapped," Klykov insisted).

Three days later, he arrived back with a party consisting of Doctor Kurt Tank, Hermann Hiel, Dusterdiek and another German called Naumann. We all ate an enormous

meal together, and then set off for Berlin in two cars. Klykov ordered that Tank should travel with him.

On reaching the Soviet Sector of the city, the scientist was given a house and forbidden to move a step in any direction. He was "protected" night and day by two ruffians from the MVD. All this was in direct contravention of assurances I had been given by SVAG that he should be permitted to live in an hotel and to move about the Eastern Zone of Berlin in perfect freedom.

I made an official protest to the Chief of the Military Directorate, General Barikov, but merely received the answer that, as Tank would not be allowed, in any circumstances, to return to the British Zone, it did not matter particularly how he was treated.

"But suppose he refuses to stay here and work for us?" I asked.

"We'll make him work for us, don't you worry!" he said.

"But aircraft can't be designed at pistol point, Comrade General. If we don't treat Tank properly, the Western Allies will protest."

"Let them protest! What good will that do?"

"The point is, I gave Tank my solemn word that he would be free to go back to the Western Zone if he did not agree to the terms and conditions we offered him."

"So you gave your word? Well, damned well take it back again!"

"But that would be outrageous."

"Outrageous or not, Tank is not leaving here," he said.

The next day, I went to a meeting attended by Major General Barinov, Colonel Belykh, Tank and Naumann. I introduced Tank, and was careful to stress the pleasure his arrival in Berlin would give to Stalin. I continued, with some gratification, that my own mission was now completed, but in this, as things turned out, I was gravely mistaken.

Tank raised no objection to the prospect of working for Russia, but said that, before reaching any final agreement, he would like to hear personally, from his friend, Professor Von Bokk, exactly what working and living conditions were like in the U.S.S.R. (Von Bokk had been carted off to Moscow, against his will, in 1945.)

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He made it clear that, providing a meeting could be arranged, and Von Bokk had nothing adverse to say about life in the Soviet Union, he would be willing to develop, on Russia's behalf, designs he already had in hand for two fighter-planes with potential speeds of 600 m.p.h. and a bomber with a possible speed of 560 m.p.h.

I advised Moscow of those facts, and received the reply that Tank would have every opportunity of meeting Von Bokk, provided that he first gave a definite undertaking to work for the U.S.S.R. The Kremlin expressed particular interest in the projected bomber, and were anxious to know if it would be capable of flying for distances of 5,000 miles in single hops.

I wrote back somewhat sceptically on this point. I doubted whether even Tank could produce an engine of the required calibre from the resources available in the U.S.S.R. Accordingly, I suggested that he should be employed initially on experiments based on our knowledge of the Rolls Royce "Nene" engine.

These well-intentioned comments succeeded only in persuading the authorities that I was personally opposed to using Tank to the full extent his abilities merited. Barinov, who saw copies of the correspondence, sent for me in a state of high perturbation. "This is fantastic!" he said. "For months and months we've been searching for Tank, and, now we've got him, you do your damndest to make out that he's no good!"

The question of Tank's employment was bandied about between Berlin and Moscow for days on end. Now that we had captured him, nobody seemed to know what on earth to do with him. Conference after conference was held, without result. There were endless telephone calls and telegrams. Stalin was resting on the shores of the Black Sea, and it became apparent that no member of the Council of Ministers would take responsibility for any decision in his absence.

In desperation, I went to see Dratvin, who telephoned Sokolovsky, who contacted Vasilovsky, who got in touch with Bulganin, who sent a chit to Malenkov, who spoke to Beriya, who at length rang up Stalin, only to find that he could not be disturbed!

Finally, Vasilovsky peremptorily ordered us to stop



'phoning or wiring Moscow concerning Tank on any pretext. We were to hold the scientist in Berlin until such time as the Government made up its mind! But Tank himself began to chafe at the delay, and told us that, unless we could reach a decision by September 6th, he proposed to return home without further ado.

By the evening of September 5th, no word had come from the Kremlin. I 'phoned Barinov, and asked him what I should do.

"Keep Tank here at all costs," he said. "Tell him something or other . . . anything . . . but don't let him go."

I 'phoned Dratvin. "Spin Tank some kind of yarn," he said, "but whatever happens, keep him in Berlin."

I 'phoned Melnikov. "Keep him here somehow," he said. "I don't care how—but keep him!"

I put in a special call to Moscow, and spoke to Marshal Vershinin. Would he, I asked, discuss the question of Tank with Vasilovsky and Bulganin? Would he, at least, let me know whether the scientist was actually wanted in Moscow, or whether all our efforts to trace him had been in vain?

"If Comrade Stalin told you to find him, it's perfectly obvious that he's wanted," he said. "You must hold on to him."

"I promised Tank he'd be free to leave if no satisfactory arrangements were made to utilise his services," I persisted. "And here he is, held in Berlin against his will."

"Your promises are of no interest to me."

"But can't you see that I'm absolutely compromised in Tank's eyes?"

"Rubbish!" said Vershinin. "Keep him in Berlin—that's all!"

I tried again. I telephoned the Kremlin Secretariat, and asked for Poskrebyshhev. But he, as I might have suspected, was basking by the Black Sea with the Father of Peoples. The official who answered me gravely explained that Stalin knew of Tank's arrival in Berlin, and hence there was no need to worry.

Four more days passed, and Dratvin suddenly received instructions that Tank was to be flown to Moscow for "conversations." I went with him and Barinov to the scientist's house, very late at night.

" My Government have invited you to the Kremlin, to talk things over, Herr Professor," Dratvin announced. " I suggest you should travel by plane. When will it be convenient for you to go? "

" I can leave tomorrow," Tank said.

" Good! And which of your colleagues would you like to take with you? "

" I should certainly like Naumann to come."

" By all means."

Here Hiel broke in. " I should be very glad if I could go too," he said. " In Moscow, I may hear some definite news of my son."

" General Dratvin will have to decide," said Tank.

" No, no—please make your own decision," urged Dratvin politely.

" Well, personally, I should like Hiel to come."

" That's settled, then. Please be ready to leave early tomorrow morning. Professor—Colonel Tokaev will accompany you on the journey."

I went back to SVAG headquarters with Dratvin and Barinov, to discuss the details of the flight and advise Moscow of the probable time of the plane's arrival. To my extreme surprise, we were met by General Melnikov and General Malkov, who told Dratvin that they had just been given instructions to hold up Tank's departure for Moscow until further notice! The harassed Dratvin explained that he had received orders from Marshal Bulganin, transmitted through Vasilovsky, that the scientist was to be flown to the U.S.S.R. with all speed. But, as chief representatives of the MGB and MVD in Germany, Melnikov and Malkov naturally had the final word. Without giving any reasons for the change of plans, they insisted that Tank should remain where he was for the present.

Dratvin 'phoned Vasilovsky, in something of a frenzy, and was curtly told that Beriya himself had decided that the " Tank case " should henceforth become the exclusive concern of the MVD.

Personally, I had a feeling that, in some way, Serov was behind the new move. He had been furious, as I was well aware, that Tank should have been contacted during his absence, and the fact that his particular Chief, Beriya, had apparently cancelled the scientist's proposed trip to Moscow

without consultation with the remaining members of the Politbureau indicated, at least to me, that the whole affair was a plot hatched between the two villains.

Melnikov and Malkov grinned and departed, and at once a meeting was held with the Chief of SVAG, his Deputy, the Chief of Staff, the head of the Military Directorate and the officer in charge of the Military Air Department. This imposing galaxy of officials assembled, with Dratvin and me, for the solitary purpose of deciding upon the best bogus tale to tell Tank. SVAG's Heroes of the Soviet Union, for all the Stars on their padded chests, lacked the common courage and decency to admit to the scientist that his trip to Moscow had been banned by the secret police.

After two hours' concentrated discussion, somebody had the original notion of telling Tank that bad weather prevented his plane from leaving the airport. The idea was acclaimed, and the Meteorological Station was instructed to prepare a false chart, showing lightning, thunder and hail all along the route. And the crew of the aircraft were told that, no matter how brightly the sun might be shining, they were steadfastly to refuse to fly, on the grounds of approaching blizzards.

In the morning, I picked up Tank, Naumann and Hiel as though nothing had happened to change our original plans. We drove to the airfield, and a long faced official showed Tank a meteorological forecast which was enough to freeze the marrow of an eagle. He needed little prompting to agree that his flight should be postponed until the following day. But, oddly enough, violent hurricanes were discerned on the route to Moscow by our experts on that occasion as well.

While Tank's journey was held up, day after day, on the strength of false weather reports, I was covertly warned by a good friend of mine that a special investigation was being carried out concerning myself. It was apparently alleged that I had committed the crime of addressing a group of underground anti-Stalinists. There were, indeed, several documents which "proved" that I had done this, and my friend was good enough to show me photostats of them.

According to him, Tank was to be given the same treatment as A. N. Tupolov, the noted Soviet aircraft expert

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who, when he had been imprisoned, during the war, had patiently designed planes for Stalin in his cell. Plans were afoot, he declared, to gaol Tank somewhere in Siberia, and to appoint me as his supervisor and fellow-prisoner.

Though I was quite prepared to answer all charges made against me in connection with my supposed speech to the anti-Stalinists, the thought of Tank being arrested frankly appalled me. My friend agreed with me that this step must be averted at all costs.

I made several fruitless telephone calls to Moscow. Then, without counting the consequences, I went to see a high official at SVAG; for fear of compromising him, I will call him Comrade X. I spoke to him with a frankness which, at any other time, I should have considered insane. "You know me, and I know you," I said. "You're well aware that I disagree with many of your ideas and more of your actions. But you cannot say that my disagreement is founded on personal motives. You cannot recall a single instance when I have asked you to do something for *me*, as an individual. Any requests I have made to you have been prompted by abstract convictions on my part that certain courses have been the correct ones to take. Now, for the first time in my life, I am going to ask you a personal favour—will you arrange for Tank to be returned to the British Zone? I regard Tank as my guest, and I cannot face the dishonour of letting him down. If he's arrested, I'll put a bullet through my head rather than go on living as a despicable Judas. I'm absolutely convinced that, if we let him go unmolested, he'll be willing to return to us if we ever need his services in the future. But, if he's imprisoned by us, no purpose will be served beyond inflicting a further dark stain on Russia's reputation."

I expected Comrade X to rave and storm at me in the routine manner, but, almost miraculously, he said nothing. Instead, he paced up and down the room for a good five minutes, then suddenly addressed me by my Christian name, for the first time since I had known him, using the 'thou' which graces conversation between good friends. He asked me to leave the matter in his hands; he would, he assured me, see what could be done.

Two days later, an order came from Marshal Sokolovsky that Tank was to be permitted to go home, on the under-

standing that he would return to Berlin at any time when we might require his services. I never discovered whether this decision was due to my talk with Comrade X or whether it was influenced by circumstances unknown to me.

It was arranged that Major General Sokolovsky and I should acquaint Tank with the good news, and that Pronin and I should transport him back to the zonal boundary. But, at the last moment Klykov made a blustering appearance, and insisted on driving the scientist to the border in his own car.

Before he left, Tank promised us that he would return to the Soviet Zone, and make the long contemplated trip to Moscow, at any time he was asked to do so.

I do not know what occurred during his journey with Klykov, but I heard later that he had reached his home quite safely.

Even then, my part in the "Tank case" was not fully played. On September 16th, I spoke to Khrunichev, the Minister of Aviation Industry, on the 'phone, and, to my complete bewilderment, he rattled off a number of questions he wished me to ask Tank concerning his projected bomber plane. When I told him that the German scientist was back in the Western Zone, he had a fit of hysterics, sobbing and bawling.

Bulganin, through Sokolovsky, had authorised Tank's return home, but Khrunichev, one of the Party chiefs most directly concerned, knew nothing about it; with us, things like this are always happening. Ivan Ivanovich has a man shot, and, several days later, the man concerned is solemnly sentenced to death in his absence by Ivan Stepanovich!

Some days after I had spoken to Khrunichev, General Melnikov sent for me. He addressed me as though he had never seen me before in his life. Had I, he demanded, accompanied Tank to the Metropole Theatre? Had my wife visited the scientist at a time when he had been laid up with a minor illness? Had I taken Naumann, Dusterdiek and Hiel to the House of Soviet Culture and introduced them, while there, to Colonel Tyulpanov?

I admitted all this cheerfully enough; I simply could not understand what the man was driving at. It transpired, however, that I was suspected—"to say the least of it,"

said Melnikov—of having engaged in “ anti-Soviet conversations ” with the visitors. I was even alleged to have told them, in the Soviet Commercial Store, that everything was very expensive in the U.S.S.R !

I have no idea whether Professor Tank, Naumann or Hermann Hiel will ever read this book. If they do, I shall be glad to have their support for my assertion that I never breathed a word against the Soviet Union in their presence. Only they are in a position to prove the fatuity of Melnikov's suspicions, which were founded on no shred of evidence but merely upon the black fears which harry the typical Communist spy-chief.

About the end of September, Hiel, who had remained in Berlin in the wan hope of gaining some news of his son, called unexpectedly at my flat and gave me a communication from Tank. The letter, which was addressed to me, contained an offer from the scientist to proceed immediately to Moscow if the Soviet Government still required his presence.

I passed it to SVAG'S Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Lukyanchenko, who transmitted its contents to Marshal Vasilovsky. From Moscow came instructions that a note was to be despatched to Tank in the following terms :—

“ If you wish to work in the U.S.S.R., you are free to enter our service unconditionally, like anyone else.  
(Sgd.) Vasilovsky.”

Lukyanchenko ordered that this text should be dictated to Hiel rather than written officially, and that I should accompany the German to the zonal boundary line, from whence he could deliver the message to Tank. There can be no doubt that I was embroiled in the business at the direct behest of the MVD, who wanted to put me to yet another test. The chauffeur of the car was unknown to me, and I discovered later that he was a disguised officer of the secret police, sent to listen to my conversation with Hiel on the way to the border.

We reached the boundary near Helmstedt, late at night. I parted cordially from Hiel, and set off on the return journey to Berlin. I stopped to snatch a few hours' rest in Brandenburg, only to discover that our car had been closely

followed by Klykov's throughout the journey, and that the Colonel was spending the rest of the night in the same hotel!

It was not long before Hiel reappeared in Berlin, bearing yet another letter to me from Tank, in which the scientist described a visit he had received from a woman who claimed to be my representative, and who had handed him a communication which, she alleged, I had written.

In point of fact, this was all nonsense. I had no female "representative," nor had I written to Tank. The whole incident had been framed by the MVD, in the hope of trapping the German into some revelation of secret contact with me.

Tank's note to me ended, conventionally enough, "... I hope your wife is in good health, and that everything is going well for you—Yours, Kurt Tank." This was quite enough to inflame fresh suspicions in the minds of the restless authorities. "What does he mean by hoping 'everything goes well for you?' " they demanded. "And why 'Yours, Kurt Tank?' " Such gentlemen, who habitually wrote to their own wives as "Dear Comrade," could not encounter the normal courtesies of existence without suspecting that they covered gross depths of infamy.

The continual suspicion to which I was subjected, the endless interrogations, the knowledge that I could not move a step without being followed, made life a continual hell for me at this period. My poor wife wept even in her sleep, from the unceasing strain. On the night of October 15th, we thought the end had come at last. The telephone rang at midnight: I was ordered to report at once to the MGB Directorate. My wife awakened our little daughter, and I embraced them both, quite certain that I would never see them again.

"Be brave to the end," said my wife, through her tears, "and I'll do all that is humanly possible to prove that they are persecuting you without reason. You've only done what they've told you to. You've always played fair with them."

I made my weary way to the Directorate, only to find that I faced nothing more than a routine interrogation. It lasted till dawn.

The more I think over the Tank case, the more con-

vinced I am that it possessed several sinister undercurrents. Many of its features remain inexplicable to me. Why, for instance, should Stalin suddenly have directed that the search for Sanger should be left in abeyance while all our energies were to be directed to finding Tank? Why should the glamorous German lady with the scientist's photograph have been "planted" on me by the MVD? And how was it that my letter of July 5th to Tank, which was supposedly handed to him by the same lady, in fact never reached him at all?

Again, what real part had Schlange played in the puzzle?

These, and many other questions concerning the affair, are still unanswerable. But I am absolutely convinced that the MVD had a decisive hand in all that went on. They were undoubtedly responsible for the dramatic switch of official interest from Sanger to Tank in the first place. But what was their object? Was it an ingenious move on the part of Serov, who, on the theory that "half a loaf is better than no bread," decided that the pursuit of Sanger was a hopeless task, and that Tank should be set up in his place as an equally valuable prey? Was Stalin, at heart, a mere foil in the hands of Serov and his fellows in the upper ranks of the MVD? That Serov was a monster of deceit, I knew only too well. The very fact, for instance, that he had repeatedly commanded his spy-ring to give me every assistance in my dealings with Tank, while Klykov had dogged my footsteps as though he were glued to me, made it perfectly clear that the Deputy Minister had issued secret instructions in direct contradiction to his public utterances.

I cannot get it out of my head that Serov was—and probably still is—mixed up in some kind of plot against Joseph Stalin. Nor can I dismiss the possibility that some move which may take the world by storm is brewing within the Kremlin.

After all, the Supreme Leader is getting old, and shakier than he cares to admit. And there is certainly no dearth of applicants for his place. All the thirteen members of the inner ruling clique are possessed by a lust for personal power, and entirely devoid of any moral scruples. Their constant concern is the likely identity of Stalin's successor. They are all quite convinced that, when the Father of



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Peoples dies, there will be a general dog-fight in which each of them will have to scratch and bite his way to survival. They all know that the man who wins the dog-fight will have no more compunction in killing off his old comrades than Stalin had at the time he acceded to power. Would it be strange, therefore, if some of them sought to ensure their own success in the battle in advance?

To me, it always seems possible that one of these Kremlin demagogues may have hit on the notion of using Vasili Stalin as a puppet ruler of Russia, while wielding the true power himself, behind the scenes. If so, the connivance of Serov would be invaluable.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Russian underground

AS my story approaches its end, I must pause to discuss briefly the vital question of underground opposition to Stalin in the Soviet Union.

Do opposition forces exist to any pronounced extent? If so, how serious is the threat they present to the Kremlin? Have they any real chance of attracting mass support? What are they trying to achieve? I will do my best to answer these crucial questions, which may have a profound bearing on the future course of history.

Since I have been living abroad, I have been impressed by the lack of attention paid to such matters by the foreign Press. Where they have been featured at all, they have usually been treated quite superficially, and commentary regarding them has been written mainly by people who lack any personal knowledge of life in the Soviet Union. The general attitude seems to be that opposition movements in Russia are purely the Russians' affair, and hence of small interest to the rest of the world.

This short-sighted view overlooks the fact that the ultimate aim of the thirteen men in the Kremlin is the total subjection of all the earth's peoples to Communist dictatorship. Already they have succeeded in splitting the world into two (cold) warring camps. Thus, internal problems in the U.S.S.R., like the long-term plans of the Politbureau, are of enormous significance to the rest of mankind. While Russia remains the fount of the unrest and insecurity which bedevil the earth and arrest human progress today, any signs of a revolt from within can only be regarded as overwhelmingly important.

Nevertheless, it is difficult for me to write about the subject in any great detail. As a one-time Soviet citizen, I can never forget that any words of mine which see the light of print are bound to be studied exhaustively by MVD officials, with the object of finding any thread, however tenuous, which may lead to the conviction of those "conspirators against the State" who dare to harbour thoughts

contrary to the dictates of the rulers. For fear of endangering many good friends who remain to fight unseen against the Kremlin's tyranny, therefore, I must withhold a good deal of the information in my possession. But, to the question of whether organised opposition groups do exist underground in the U.S.S.R., I can at least return an unqualified "Yes!" as an answer.

There have always been such groups, and there always will be. Despite the brutal terrorism employed by the Politbureau, they have not been stamped out, nor lessened in number. For every underground rebel tortured, imprisoned or executed by the NKVD, another has come forward to take his place in the fight for lost freedom. Even the NKVD itself, even the picked forces which guard the Kremlin, contain members of opposition organisations in their ranks.

And, among the people who have dared to voice the discontent which permeates the whole country, have been many martyrs; many heroes whom the worst abominations of the NKVD have failed to subdue. These men have had their fingers cut off, needles driven beneath their toenails, their backs seared by white-hot irons, without breaking in spirit. In cracked, tortured voices, they have affirmed to the last that love of freedom cannot be burned out of the human soul.

Well do I remember the radiant example of one unmasked oppositionist who, as his NKVD executioners slowly raised their rifles to their shoulders, said calmly, "What are you waiting for? You'd better get this dirty job done before freedom catches up with you!" He was murdered, but his name lives as an inspiration.

Opposition groups operate in many different areas of the vast country. Almost all of them function independently. In the general way, they have no clear-cut programme of action, but rely on propaganda, in the form of printed leaflets, to spread their message. Their immediate object is to make as many people as possible conscious that all hope of a different way of life has not been extinguished—that freedom still lives and is still worth fighting for. Certain of the larger groups have definite plans worked out, however, to be effected whenever the moment for their accomplishment is judged to be ripe.

Leningrad has always been a main centre of opposition; there, the tradition of democracy persists beneath all the bludgeoning the Kremlin can inflict on it. I am giving away no secrets when I say this—the NKVD know it as well as I do. No city of the U.S.S.R. has suffered more keenly for its instinctive refusal to fit into the barren mould of Communism.

Ever since the Kronstadt uprising of March, 1921, Leningrad has been notorious for its revolutionary attitude to the regime. In 1925, its Party and Komsomol organisations were the only bodies in the country to express their open disagreement with the general policy of the Central Committee. At that time, Molotov, Voroshilov, Kalinin and Kirov were despatched en masse to cope with the situation. Enormous numbers of Party members were expelled, and Kirov was set up as local dictator to restore public order—a task which, brute as he was, took him practically eight years.

In 1934, Kirov was shot, and Stalin himself visited the city to set in train the blood-drenched purge which marked that ghastly year. Zhdanov was appointed in Kirov's place, and thousands of Leningrad's inhabitants were shot without mercy, while tens of thousands were exiled to distant forced labour camps.

All these tribulations, like their sufferings during the war-time siege of the city by the Nazis, served only to steel the spirit of the people of Leningrad. Today, they are experienced masters of underground opposition, and there is no doubt that the proportion of anti-Stalinists in the Leningrad Party organisation is greater than that evinced in any other district of the U.S.S.R. Two typical slogans emanating from the city are, "No Tsar—no Stalin—but Democracy!" and, "No Party Dogmas, but the Peoples Will!"

Ample evidence of underground activity in Leningrad is provided by the frequency with which such slogans, with leaflets and proclamations, make their appearance. Nearly all bear the letter "D"—symbol of the struggle against totalitarian rule. I have read much of this secretly distributed material, and can vouch for the fact that it is produced by serious, well educated and basically democratic people.

There is also a pro-Communist group in Leningrad—but

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one pledged to restore Communism in its 'pure' form. From all appearances, this organisation must have representatives in the highest quarters. Its information is invariably accurate, and its reactions to current events both swift and intelligent. In at least one instance, to my own knowledge, it issued a proclamation on a Government decree some days before the measure was published officially.

This particular group urges a return to Leninism; its propaganda is based on the theory that Stalin and the Politbureau have betrayed everything for which Lenin really stood, and have become counter-revolutionary in their methods and fundamentally anti-Socialist in their aims.

There are certain indications that the former Secretary of the Central Committee, A. A. Kuznetsov, the First Secretary of the Leningrad Provincial Party Committee and the President of the Leningrad Council of Workers' Deputies, P. S. Popkov—all of whom disappeared suddenly, early in 1949—were closely linked with this group. If so, their banishment from public affairs may have heralded the organisation's temporary demise.

It is often claimed by the authorities that Leningrad is still haunted by the influence of Zinoviev and Trotsky, but this is untrue. The philosophy of these men has long been out-dated, and Zinoviev's cowardly exhibition at his trial, and just before his execution, effectually frustrated any feelings of public sympathy he may once have aroused.

One of the most potent forms of opposition to Stalin rests in what is known, in the U.S.S.R., as "local nationalism." Though the Central Committee has recently and surprisingly ceased to fulminate in its propaganda against this widespread symptom of popular discontent, there are any number of small groups which covertly express and encourage it.

It must always be remembered that any man in the Soviet Union who upholds the rights of his people and claims the smallest measure of national independence for them is at once officially branded as an enemy of Russia, a traitor and paid hireling of capitalism. There is no greater crime, in the eyes of the Politbureau, than local patriotism.

The points of view of the "underground nationalists" who band themselves into small, active groups in every corner of the vast country are basically similar. They con-

sider the Politbureau to be a counter-revolutionary and reactionary body, whose imperialist ambitions ceaselessly endanger the peace of the earth. They are fully convinced that Stalin and his immediate followers must be forcibly overthrown "in the interests"—to quote from a statement of policy issued by three of them—"of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and the world at large."

They stand for democracy in every sphere of life, coupled with the inherent right of all peoples to establish their own ways of life in accordance with their racial traditions, their religion, their customs and the particular level of their economic development. They believe in union between states—but between independent states, with free representation in council and voices of their own. They resolutely refuse to accept the principle, inflicted by Stalin, of centralised rule by the Kremlin over a country virtually stretching from the North Pole to China and Afghanistan, from Scandinavia to Canada, and from the Balkans to Japan, made up of a patchwork of once free and individual nations.

They believe—and I share their view—that there are not one but two great systems of oppression operating in the U.S.S.R., one directed against the Russian people themselves and the other imposed upon the minority nations. They are convinced that personal freedom decreases in proportion to the centralisation of power.

These groups of "local nationalists" have functioned for a long time. They were active during the period of the Soviet-Finnish war; they evinced their presence particularly when Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Bukovina and Bessarabia were first occupied by Soviet troops. And, despite the brutal and unceasing efforts of the authorities to obliterate them, they persist in greater strength than ever today.

Indeed, some of the measures, childish in their stupidity, taken by the Politbureau against the national minorities have had no effect upon them beyond increasing their spirit of opposition. As one of the group leaders remarked in 1947, Stalin has proved himself the finest of all propagandists for their cause.

Another underground rebel organisation is the Union of North Caucasian Democrats (SSKD). This young and

energetic group has adopted the prudent watchword, " Think during twenty-three hours of the day, and act during one! "

Among the nationals of the trans-Caucasian countries, the Georgian intelligentsia are particularly active in oppositionist moves. Those people who suppose that Georgia is a stronghold of Bolshevism, merely because Stalin and Beriya happen to be Georgians, are sadly mistaken.

I could enumerate many more minor groups, but there is small point in referring to them, since they have not yet won their spurs in any practical activity. They lack solid political beliefs, and, apart from a vague, " down with Stalin " attitude, show few signs of possessing more than anarchic convictions.

The more widely supported groups, however, have borne and sacrificed much in the last sixteen years, and the courage of their members has been beyond praise. Constantly, they have lived on the brink of prison or execution; endlessly the shadow of the NKVD has hovered over them. But they have not given in. They will never give in while freedom remains a goal rather than a reality.

One oppositionist group came into existence solely as a consequence of the anti-Semitism which is daily assuming more repulsive forms in the U.S.S.R. In the early days of the Soviet regime, anti-Semitism was seen as a crime, and any public expressions of it were punishable by law. But, during the last ten years, this form of mania has not only reappeared, but flowered into ghastly bloom. One of its worst manifestations was undoubtedly the creation of the Birobidzhan Jewish Province, in the Eastern reaches of the country. This was acclaimed by Soviet propaganda as an act of tender solicitude for the Jews, but in fact it simply involved their banishment as undesirable people.

During the second world war, such expressions as " dirty Yid " or " bloody Jewboy " became current epithets in the U.S.S.R. And, in April, 1944, the Central Committee of the Party issued a directive to its Personnel Department to the effect that all Jews in responsible posts were to be unobtrusively dismissed from office. The only exceptions to this racial purge were such " fully Russianised " Jews as Mekhlis, then Minister of State Control, and Kaganovich.

After the war, the anti-Semitic trend became further pronounced. Today, no director of any State organisation will take on Jewish employees unless they bear special references from the Party.

In the communal living quarters which house most of the people of the U.S.S.R., Jewish residents are continually subjected to mocking insults. It is the fashionable thing to bait them in every way possible. If any Jew is mentioned by name, someone is sure to say, "But he's just a damned Yid!"

From all this has sprung an underground Jewish group with its headquarters in a town of Central Russia. It is pledged to fight—in words borrowed from the Soviet Constitution itself!—against "any form of national, racial or religious discrimination." It issues typewritten leaflets, attacking anti-Semitism in all its forms, calling for national protection of Jews, and emphasising Stalin's betrayal of Leninism and the Party's reactionary deviation from the path of true Socialism.

There is no doubt that this organisation is represented in a large number of Soviet cities and towns, and enjoys the respect and sympathy of many other opposition groups. Nor is there any question that the Central Committee is seriously concerned about its activities.

In 1947, I had the opportunity of talking to one of the leaders of the group, and can vouch for the fact that it cannot lightly be dismissed as an anti-Stalinist force.

Much significance may also be attached, in my opinion, to the fruits of the organisation which, at least until the end of the war, went under the name of "People's Democrats." It sought the overthrow of the Soviet Government, and its replacement by an administration which, while guiding the reins of economic affairs, would grant all peasants the right to leave the collective farms if they so desired, allow full freedom for the creation of fresh political parties (barring only Communists, Fascists or Monarchists from active representation), permit secession of any nation from the Union of Republics, and sanction the formation of further independent Republics with full autonomy.

During the war years, the People's Democrats fought whole-heartedly in defence of the Fatherland, being convinced that opposition tactics at that time would have been,



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in effect, pro-Hitlerite rather than anti-Stalinist. One of their leaders expressed this view-point succinctly in a speech delivered on July 7th, 1942. " Stalin no longer exists as individual national leader," he said. " He is simply a member of the great anti-Nazi triumvirate which directs the free world in its battle against Hitler. Any blow levelled at Stalin today is also a blow aimed at Roosevelt and Churchill. To oppose him is simply to play Hitler's game. Hence, any opposition now is betrayal of Russia."

Nevertheless, at the end of 1944, when the war in the West had virtually been won, the People's Democrats returned to their struggle against the despotic regime of the Politbureau. But conditions were not favourable and results achieved were few.

When victory finally came to the Allies, this group—together with the " Moderate Socialists " and " Former Front-liners "—was merged into the " Underground Democratic Party of Russia " (PDPR), but disaster swiftly overtook the new coalition. The PDPR leaders perished, practically to a man, at the hands of the NKVD, and it is doubtful whether the movement any longer exists as an organised Party. For all that, its influence persists.

The PDPR had an eventful history, extending from the nineteen-thirties. In those days, many once-enthusiastic members of the Bolshevik Party were becoming increasingly convinced that the Central Committee was departing wildly from the high road of orthodox Leninism, and becoming no more than a counter-revolutionary oligarchy. This growing conviction was reflected in the spontaneous creation of any number of minor underground opposition groups—particularly in the Northern Caucasus, Trans-Caucasia, the Mid-Volga, the Ural area, Uzbekistan, the Ukraine, Belorussia and Moscow itself.

The years of Stalin's panic, following Kirov's assassination, spelt doom to a number of these groups, but many were able to survive. And, about this time, the Central Committee made the pregnant discovery that " local nationalism " was infecting Party members in scattered parts of the country. In its drive against this formidable aberration, masses of people were exiled or put to death—including hundreds of members of opposition groups which had never included a word concerning nationalist privileges in their

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programmes. The situation became so obscure that Postyshev, then Secretary of the Central Committee, was moved to say, "While fighting 'local nationalism,' we have hitherto failed to notice that an anti-Soviet movement, embracing representatives of every nation in the country, including Russia itself, is growing up under our very noses! Now we can hardly tell nationalists from other underground rebels!"

The NKVD, however, were not particular. They tarred all concerned with the brush of "local nationalism," and, between 1937 and 1939, hordes of alleged opposition leaders—mainly men serving in the armed forces—were exterminated. At this time, too, the following members of the ruling hierarchy were killed or banished on suspicion of "nationalist tendencies":—

Fairulla Khodzhaev	...	First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan.
Gikalo	... ..	First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belorussia.
Mirzoyan	... ..	First Secretary of the Central Committee Party of Kazakhstan.
Ikramov	... ..	Uzbekistan.
Enukidze	.....	Secretary of the Central Executive Committee (TsIK) of the U.S.S.R.
Lominadze	... ..	Georgia.
Sheboldaev	... ..	Don Cossacks.
Kalmykov	... ..	Kabardino Balkariya.
Simon Takoev	... ..	Northern Osetia.
Kossior	... ..	Ukraine.
Lyubchenko	... ..	Ukraine.
Goloded	... ..	Belorussia.
Kabakov	... ..	Ural.
Musabekov	... ..	Trans-Caucasia.
Isaev	... ..	Turkestan.
Zatonski	... ..	Ukraine.

And there were many more.

The period of Stalin's panic (*Stalinskaya reaktsia*) may be said to have lasted from 1934—1938, and the surviving ranks of the opposition were swift to make their presence felt when the blood-bath was over. No sooner had the Father of the Peoples made his memorable announcement that the "building of Socialism" was completed, when many groups in Moscow and Leningrad announced at underground meetings that they were henceforth renouncing the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and, above all, those of Stalinism. It was then that the PDPR truly came into being as a Party.

Its first major move was to issue a proclamation which roundly criticised the U.S.S.R.'s attack on Finland. The Central Committee was bluntly characterised as a "reactionary force," and the people of the Soviet Union were called upon to oppose its will by "all means possible in the present situation."

Previous to this, however, a joint manifesto had been secretly issued by the People's Democrats and the "Moderate Socialists," condemning Stalin's pact with Hitler. It was signed by Demokratov and Dubov for the People's Democrats, and by Pyatigorsky and Rostovsky on behalf of the Moderate Socialists.

A further joint proclamation was put out, over the same four signatures, at the time when Soviet forces invaded Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Bessarabia. I reproduce the text from memory—no doubt the MVD will correct any small errors which may appear in it!

"Comrades! The Stalin-Molotov clique has elected to betray the Fatherland! The attack on the Baltic States, Poland, Finland, Bukovina and Bessarabia offer convincing evidence of the imperialist aims of the Politbureau, and of its deviation from the true ideals of Socialism. Nobody can now doubt any longer that the Kremlin is counter-revolutionary in its methods.

"Everyone into battle against the Stalin-Molotov clique!

"Those who hold the Fatherland dear—join the ranks of the anti-Stalinists!

"Those who stand for fraternal co-existence of all peoples—join our ranks!

"Down with the imperialist clique in the Kremlin!"

Such united sorties as these provided the stimulus for full

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amalgamation between the two organisations, and eventually, as I have explained, they merged—together with the “Former Front-liners”—into the Underground Democratic Party of Russia, or PDPR.

Though this composite group was hacked out of effective existence by the NKVD, its creation remains one of the most courageous manifestations of anti-Stalinism seen in the U.S.S.R. during the last fifteen years, and its influence remains a potent legacy to this day.

The PDPR's draft programme was an interesting document. It declared that the All-Union Communist Party, as governed by the Central Committee, had betrayed the original spirit of the revolution, and had transformed itself into a counter-revolutionary force, inimical to the real interests of workers, peasants and intellectuals alike. The whole country, it continued, had been choked by a tangled web of despotism, spun by the Kremlin. Neither Socialism nor the dictatorship of the proletariat had any existence in the U.S.S.R.; the only dictatorship discernible was that exerted by the members and candidate members of the Politbureau. Marxism-Leninism had been debased into a completely spurious religion, with Stalin as its Prophet. There was no Government in U.S.S.R., in the accepted sense of the word—merely a small but incredibly powerful group of men with an insane lust for dominance.

The programme insisted that the Soviet regime must be totally abolished, and replaced by a social structure based on democracy and free representation. Each nation in the U.S.S.R. sufficiently mature for political independence should be allowed the opportunity of deciding its own destiny, by means of a mandate from its people. All races should be free to unite or not to unite, as they wished; individual freedom must always precede official union. Personal liberty must be the living basis of the new order. In the sphere of internal organisation, the draft declared, the watchword must be, “Not socialism nor capitalism, but justice!”

The programme contained details of a plan to restore the banished millions in Siberia to their own lands.

It made no call for violent action, but stressed, on the contrary, the necessity of avoiding civil war by every means

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possible. It rested great confidence and hope in the United Nations Organisation.

There is no doubt that the PDPR, containing, as it did, representatives of almost every nation in Russia in its ranks, represented a serious threat to Stalin's regime of terror. Whether it can ever recover in full strength, following its treatment at the hands of the NKVD, and whether, indeed, its programme will ever be implemented, only the course of future history can show.

It remains an unhappy fact that there is today no single anti-Stalinist group sufficiently powerful to speak with any kind of authority for the whole country, or even on behalf of any particular class of the population. Certainly, various national Republics and Provinces contain groups which effectively represent and voice the rebellious under-currents which stir their own peoples, but their influence rarely extends beyond their national borders.

There are, of course, any number of individuals who call themselves anti-Stalinists and demand the overthrow of the tyrants in the Kremlin, but nobody can tell whether they would join a general group, if one were there to be joined, or, indeed, whether they have any feasible alternative to the present regime to propound. They are separate, small and irresolute hammers beating at the swollen head of totalitarianism, but clearly a sledge hammer blow is needed if that head is to be toppled from its massive shoulders.

Nothing short of a widely-based, mass opposition movement, in fact, can hope to achieve any appreciable results. But the problem of perfecting some method of secret inter-communication between the members of such an organisation, in a country of the size of Russia, is most formidable. Attempts to co-ordinate rebellious action have been made, time without number, during the last fifteen years, but the shadow of the NKVD has intervened on practically every occasion. Somebody, invariably, has given away vital information, and heroes of the underground have perished as a consequence. After thirty years of Soviet "education," many people lack all normal instincts of loyalty and good faith, and act the part of spies and informers as a matter of course. Frequently, the plans of opposition groups have

capsized through treachery on the part of people believed to be wholeheartedly behind the project concerned.

In such circumstances, one's greatest friends, one's closest relations, must be regarded as suspect. One can only be sure of men with whom one has stood shoulder to shoulder throughout bitter years of struggle. Wide contacts become too risky to be entertained. Well-merited fear of their fellows is a perpetual brake on the progress of oppositionists.

It is sometimes asked why those who strive for freedom within the U.S.S.R. do not link themselves with the various emigré organisations outside the country.

The fact is that, ever since the time of Stalin's panic following the assassination of Kirov, the internal struggle has had to be waged without reference to the outside world. Behind the Iron Curtain, nobody knows or is permitted to know what Russian emigrés may be doing in any part of the earth. And Soviet propaganda is careful to foster the impression that emigré groups are peopled exclusively by black-hearted fascists and reactionary traitors. Certainly, not everybody believes these fables. My friends and I, for instance, were able to obtain a copy of the emigré journal, *Socialist News* (Socialistitsheski Vestnik) and swiftly discovered that many of our compatriots abroad possessed ideas which were completely acceptable to opposition circles in the U.S.S.R. Unfortunately though, this was by no means an invariable rule. In 1938, we got hold of a number of other emigré publications, and the contents of most of them frankly appalled us. It seemed that White Russians, in the main, spoke an entirely different language from our own people, and that there was little prospect of their even understanding each other's viewpoints. The emigrés appeared to be lost in consideration of problems which had not possessed any real significance since before the 1917 revolution. This futile disinterment of dead history inclined us to believe that the gulf between the emigrés, still squabbling over Kerensky, and the Soviet people, bowed down by years of Stalinism, was too vast to be bridged to any effective extent.

Towards the end of 1944, we received further copies of various emigré papers, and set ourselves to study them closely, in order to gain a fuller conception of our compatriot's mentality. We found that the various articles on

the U.S.S.R. presented a picture so distorted as to be a caricature of existing conditions. The writers over-simplified to a point of imbecility, and, in many cases, told downright lies. It was obvious that the emigrés were so cut off from the U.S.S.R. that they lacked any real comprehension of what went on there. They certainly had no notion of the very real perils facing members of opposition groups, nor of the unavoidable lack of unity between them.

To read these papers—and, indeed, to hear those emigrés who re-entered Russia with Hitler's invaders—one would have supposed that the U.S.S.R. was riddled with a network of underground organisations, all working in unison to overthrow the regime and possessed by the strongest tendencies to restore the Monarchy!

But, despite their absurd exaggerations, we could not blame the emigrés for their lack of knowledge respecting the U.S.S.R. The country's isolation, under Stalinism, was profound, and people who had not lived in it throughout the period which "completed the building of Socialism," the war years and the era of post-war tyranny, could hardly be expected to comprehend the full tragedy of existence under Soviet rule. There was no doubt that the emigrés sincerely wished to know the truth about the U.S.S.R.; they were simply not given a chance to learn it.

Today, however, prospects of a rapprochement between emigré circles and opposition groups in Russia appears a good deal brighter than formerly. As a result of the war, very large numbers of Soviet people have had the opportunity of working in various countries of the West, and there is every probability that many of the emigrés' mistaken conjectures have been corrected through personal contact with men who know the truth about the U.S.S.R. from bitter experience.

Still, one cannot escape the fact that, though there are many anti-Stalinists, co-ordinated action between them remains much more of a hope than a reality.

In view of the facts I have summarised, three questions inevitably present themselves. Is the underground struggle really worth pursuing? Can the task which the scattered elements of opposition have set themselves ever be more than a hopeless one, impossible to realise? Is the loss of life involved justified?

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My answer to all three questions is simply this—freedom has to be won. Nobody drops it by parachute—one has to fight for it. And one must fight for it, because, without it, life is not worth living.

In the U.S.S.R., particularly, the struggle is everything. There is no chance at all that the Politbureau will change its character. Dictators are not subject to changes of heart. Hence, liberty can only be kept alive by the underground groups, scattered and limited in scope as they may be.

What are the immediate objectives of the secret struggle?

First, I think, to educate all members of opposition groups into democratic ways of thought, by means of intelligent criticism of the Soviet regime and concentrated emphasis upon the true interests of the Fatherland and its peoples. Naturally, study of foreign democracies and their ways of life is pursued as fully as conditions allow.

The next most important aim is to awaken the consciousness of the masses to the issues involved, and to spread the spirit of opposition as widely as possible.

Leaflets, as I have said, are the main media of propaganda used by opposition groups. They are effective in many ways, but principally, perhaps, as constant reminders of the fact that rebels still exist in the Soviet Union. When people have been drilled for decades into acceptance of slavery, the news that there are certain people to whom freedom remains a steadfast goal is itself an inspiration.

I have before me an opposition leaflet secretly circulated during the Moscow festivities on Aviation Day in 1947. It is typical of many others, and reads:—

“ Comrades !

“ Do you wish your country to share Germany’s fate? Must its people be sent to their death, merely to satisfy the crazed ambitions of Stalin? Are you willing that Russia should invite the wrath of free nations by a policy of aggressive imperialism?

“ We appeal to you to think deeply on these subjects.

“ Comrades, never cease to believe that the dawn of true freedom and happiness will rise again for us. Your names can be inscribed on the scroll of liberty ! Down with Stalin and his creed ! You will know us



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by the letter 'D'—symbol of the underground struggle for liberty! " PDPR.

Here is an extract from a printed letter sent by the PDPR to a large number of prominent Party members in Moscow, Sverdlovsk, Leningrad, some towns in the Northern Caucasus, and even Berlin, on the first day of the conference called to establish the Cominform.

" War is near! And, when it comes, it will bear small resemblance to the last upheaval. Our towns may well be shattered by atomic bombs. You know, from the example of Hiroshima, just what that means. And you must realise that we no longer possess an Ally in the world.

" When the disaster of war overwhelms us, people will ask what *you* did to avert the tragedy! What matters occupied your mind while Stalin led the country headlong to ruin? The vital question you have to face now is, **ARE YOU WITH THE PEOPLE OR AGAINST THEM?** Where do you stand? To be with the people is to fight against the Kremlin conspirators! To defend peace is to wage the underground battle against Stalin! "

It may well be questioned whether mere leaflets of this nature have any real hope of producing effective results. The battle is so unequal. The authorities have every weapon of modern science at their command, while the rebels, working in ceaseless peril of detection, are equipped with nothing. In the face of the power of the NKVD, the struggle against Soviet totalitarianism is much like the fabled task of rolling a large stone up a mountain, only for it to fall, again and again, from the summit and crush those beneath. Is it worth risking the lives of the flower of the population in rebellious activity, the value of which, to say the least, can only be uncertain?

Indubitably, underground work in the U.S.S.R. claims a terrifying number of victims. The spy net of the NKVD is almost impenetrable, and the vengeance wreaked upon unmasked rebels is nothing less than barbaric. I have read almost all there is to read about the revolutionary move-

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ment in Russia before 1917, and I have talked to old Bolsheviks exiled to Siberia in the days of the Tsar. I am fully persuaded that the methods of Stalin's secret police are incomparably more brutal than those used by the Tsarist forces. Prison or exile prior to the revolution was paradise in comparison with that suffered beneath the Soviet regime.

Thus, heroism is the first essential for anybody entering the ranks of the underground in the U.S.S.R.—heroism enhanced by a profound and lasting faith that freedom will triumph in the end against all obstacles. No matter how vast the forces ranged against them, the underground fighters themselves are convinced that their work is both right and necessary.

Nobody supposes, of course, that leaflets, of themselves, can produce a revolution. But undoubtedly they create an effect; they are passed from hand to hand as though they were written in gold. Enormous difficulties beset their production, and the knowledge is ever present that the smallest error in organisation may result in torture and imprisonment.

Though convinced that Stalin's regime will ultimately be overthrown, the secret oppositionists harbour no illusions that their own efforts alone can accomplish its downfall. Nor do they cling to any exaggerated hopes that the whole people will unite in an armed revolt in today's conditions. Most underground leaders are well acquainted with Russian history, and know that all revolutionary movements of any real significance in the country have taken place in eras of conflict with foreign nations. Tsarism was ended, for instance, in March, 1917, when Russia was at war with Germany, while the 1905 social explosion, which shook the Tsarist regime to its very foundations, occurred at the time of the Russo-Japanese war. And similar outbursts against the ruling power have been witnessed in other countries in time of war—the Germany Monarchy fell in 1918, and Hitler and Mussolini both perished amid the encroaching flames of the second world conflict. There seems to be some historical law that a despotism can only be ended when its progenitors become involved in a war between nations.

## CHAPTER VII

### War in 1952?

THE Politbureau are convinced beyond any argument that the world has been finally divided into two groups, between whom eventual conflict is inevitable.

Preparations for war are being made in the U.S.S.R. to-day with an urgency more feverish than any which marked the period preceding the last conflict. There is no possible doubt that, as soon as Stalin is satisfied that the U.S.S.R. is sufficiently strong, he will give the word for a general attack on the West. There will be no warnings.

The underground fighters of the U.S.S.R. are keenly aware of these facts. Nobody should suppose that they themselves desire war—they are acutely conscious of the horrors a third world conflict, with atomic weapons available to both sides, would bring to Russia. But they know, without any question, that Stalin is determined on war as an ultimate means of subduing the earth to Communism, and, though they lack any real power to counter his preparations for an onslaught on the West, they are convinced of their duty to warn the world of the peril it faces. They believe that, while the war launched by the Kremlin will mean suicide for Stalin and Communism, a terrible toll of human life may be taken before the free world triumphs over its enemies.

Who knows whether it may not prove to be Russia's own mission to crush the despotic tyranny which bows her to-day? And is it not inevitable that the scattered underground movement will have an enormous part to play in this last revolution? Indeed, the very fact of its being so widely spread about the vast country, in small, self-supporting groups, will add much to its power and effectiveness when at last co-ordinated action becomes both practicable and essential.

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And, once the power of Stalinism has been exorcised from the land, underground groups, with their profound local knowledge, will act as a most valuable stabilising factor in circumventing the chaos and anarchy which invariably follow mass revolts, and in avoiding the consequent peril of civil war.

Though their present role is patient and unspectacular, the underground fighters will play an intensely significant part in the years ahead, if the course of history proceeds as they think it will.

Although Stalin has never renounced his objective of world revolution, there is no doubt that the prospects of its achievement seem less rosy to him now than previously. Indeed, for some time past, the conspirators in the Kremlin have revealed a desperate, "nor-or-never" air in all their machinations, and the final gamble of war is seen as the only feasible means remaining of inflicting global Communism on the earth. For things, from the Politbureau's point of view, have gone seriously awry in recent years.

Stalin and his immediate henchmen believed firmly that, after the second world war, the world's democracies would suffer economic chaos on an unprecedented scale, with ever-increasing impoverishment of their peoples. Since social despair provides the only fertile soil for Communism, they hoped to attract rich crops of adherents throughout the nations of Europe and Asia, and even in America itself. They were confident that the Communists would attain so large a measure of power in foreign Parliaments that many countries could be transformed into virtual Soviet colonies without a shot being fired. They assured themselves that the trend of popular feeling everywhere was towards their own barren creed.

In this they were profoundly mistaken. The world did not want Communism. Only in France and Italy did it appear likely, in the early post-war period, that events were going to develop as the Kremlin desired. In all other countries of Europe, Communist stock, instead of rising to heights of new prosperity, slumped alarmingly, it became evident that the Communists of Western Europe had no hope of achieving power with popular consent. Strive as

they would to hoodwink the masses into believing that the cul-de-sac of Stalinism led to peace and eventual prosperity, they never obtained any really decisive support. Moscow was left to do its own dirty work. Its backing in the Western democracies was recognised as being too meagre to represent any more than a nuisance value.

Unfortunately, the Kremlin will not accept the verdict of mankind. The thirteen rulers of Russia regard the Communisation of the earth as an inevitable culmination of history; the more impossible it appears, the more they believe in it. They cannot even concern themselves with the welfare of their own people, for their people are only important to them as links in the chain with which they insanely seek to bind the free world.

They are now fully reconciled to the fact that their brand of world revolution necessitates war. Lenin and Trotsky may have believed that convenient risings would occur in each country, given certain conditions; that the proletariat of every nation would take over the "means of production, distribution and exchange." But Stalin and Molotov know better. They realise, from bitter experience, that the workers of the West show little, if any, proclivity for violent uprising. They know they can no longer hope for home-made revolutions; that Communism must be inflicted from outside.

The peril is real. No Western country can afford, for a single moment, to relax its vigilance against a sudden onslaught. The Soviet rulers are becoming desperate, and may decide, at any juncture, that their last chance of achieving their aims has arrived. Every measure must be used to counter their completely spurious propaganda for "world peace," which is aimed solely at persuading the the democracies to cut down their defence programmes and reduce the strength they can muster against a treacherous attack. Britain and America, particularly, should be on their guard against the Kremlin's efforts to force them to deploy their military forces in many different parts of the world, and so draw them away from the main potential theatre of operations.

Why has Stalin so far delayed his attack on the Western democracies? In attempting to answer this question, I

should, perhaps, make it clear that my views are not based on mere personal impressions, but on authentic documentary evidence. Naturally, I cannot divulge how this evidence reached me. Were I to tell the full story, the MVD would be equipped with priceless information.

In mid-September, 1947, on leave in Moscow, I took part in a momentous conference attended by a small and carefully selected band of underground anti-Stalinists. It took place in a summer resort, on the outskirts of the city, and the three main items on the agenda were the forthcoming inauguration of the Cominform, the peril of a new war, and the part to be played by the opposition groups if war materialised.

The speakers represented the best elements of the underground fighters for freedom. To a man, they were people of wide political experience, all employed overtly in important Government posts, and all possessed of significant information. I will summarise as many of the facts their spokesmen presented as I dare, without risk of endangering their present safety.

The first speaker gave us an interesting analysis of the current views of the Central Committee. He was in an excellent position to propound this, since he had recently attended a high-level meeting called to discuss the projected Cominform, and had personally seen much correspondence between the Politbureau and fraternal Communist Parties outside the U.S.S.R. His conclusions were these :

The Central Committee was irrevocably convinced that the world had been split into two opposing camps, and that war between them was, at length, inevitable.

The two and a half years which had passed since the end of the conflict with the Axis Powers had not produced the rise to power of Communist Parties in Western Europe which had been expected. On the contrary, the influence of such Parties was steadily waning, and decisive measures must be adopted if Communism was to retain even the tenuous foothold it possessed amid the democracies.

But, while Communist Parties had failed dismally to attain power by the democratic means at their disposal in free countries, a different story had been written in the satellite states. It seemed clear that satisfactory results could be attained when—and only when—the Soviet Union took a

direct hand in the game. Thus, while obedient co-operation was still required from foreign Communist Parties, it must be understood very clearly that Moscow was the boss in all operations.

Marshall Aid, with its threat of European recovery, was the encroaching enemy which might yet ruin everything. Hence, all possible was to be done to sow mistrust of the Plan in the minds of the masses, and to make it, as far as was feasible, unproductive. France and Italy, the "weakest links in the capitalist chain," were to become the principal wrecking centres of Europe's rehabilitation.

On these broad points, all members of the Politbureau were in agreement. They differed merely on minor details, such as, for instance, the attitude to be adopted towards the Communist Party of Finland. Zhdanov was of the opinion that no Finnish representatives should be invited to attend the conference called to create the Cominform. Any such invitation, he urged, would be tantamount to an admission that Finland was an independent state. But everybody knew that the country was an integral part of Russia, similar in every respect to the sixteen Republics of the U.S.S.R., and that it must, one day, be officially "re-incorporated."

The speaker mentioned this outburst with some amusement, remarking that every schoolboy was aware that Finland had been "a part of Russia" only between 1909 and 1917.

Zhdanov had also had much to say on the subject of the most effective tactics to employ when the Cominform had come into existence. Every use must be made of agents abroad, "from Ambassadors to fish-porters," to foment subversive action and create economic chaos—in short, to forestall the benefits of the Marshall Plan. He insisted that the role of foreign Communist Parties was to assist the Politbureau in creating a "revolutionary situation," and then to take formal responsibility for exploiting it according to "the will of the people."

Molotov had disagreed strongly with this, saying that Zhdanov's mind moved in an "anarchic Utopia," and had gone on to complain that the "revolutionary tempo" in the world was wretchedly sluggish. His opinion of the

fraternal parties in foreign countries was extremely low. They were, he affirmed, incapable of creating their own revolutions; direct action by the U.S.S.R. was needed in every case. And indeed, in his opinion, the world situation not only permitted but invited direct action. The Western nations were demobilising; they lacked both the arms and the will to oppose aggression. "Therefore," persisted Molotov, "we must clear the Allies out of Berlin and Vienna. We must stabilise our positions in Hungary, Greece and Czechoslovakia. We must keep on 'liberating' countries one after the other."

The speaker called Zhdanov's proposed line of action "political expansion" and Molotov's "territorial expansion." It seemed that no firm decision in favour of one or the other had been taken at the conference concerned, and later I obtained, from an entirely authentic source, details of a third approach favoured by Andreev, Khrushchev, Voroshilov and Stalin himself.

This embraced the belief that, while the "tempo of revolution" was admittedly parlously slow in the Western democracies, and Marshall Aid threatened to retard it yet further, Europe remained the prime object of Soviet interest. Asia—even with China included—took second place in the programme of world revolution.

But the first objective—the overthrow of Europe by means of fomented revolution—could not be achieved without a decisive and successful war against Great Britain, which would also, and quite inevitably, involve war against the United States. The U.S.A. possessed the atomic bomb, while its aircraft and rocket weapons were greatly in advance of any which could be employed by the U.S.S.R. Therefore, for the time being, the second objective—the subjugation of Asia to Communism—must take first place. The victim nearest at hand, and easiest to deal with at the immediate moment, was China. All energies must be devoted, accordingly, to the enslavement of that vast country to the rule of the Kremlin, while reserves were built up for the final onslaught on the Western democracies. Meanwhile, the fraternal Communist Parties in America and Europe must be used to combat the Marshall Plan by every conceivable means, and to create sufficient chaos in the West to make its countries helpless prey for the



Soviet onset when the moment for its delivery was thought to be ripe.

The solution of the Chinese problem would take, it was felt, between eighteen months and two years. By the end of that period, Russia's Asian frontiers would be secure, and, apart from the enormous resultant strengthening of her reserves, any possible danger of having to fight upon three fronts—West, South and East—would have been removed. Furthermore, the constant brandishing of the pistol of Communism in the faces of Far Eastern nations—Burma, Malaya, Korea and Indo-China, for instance—and the deliberate creation of unrest within their borders, would have the happy effect of forcing the capitalist countries to deploy their armed forces over wide areas of the globe. Again, such forces might well be compelled to attack Far Eastern nationals in quelling Moscow-inspired revolts, which would give the U.S.S.R. an admirable opportunity of going to these "tortured peoples" aid, in the council chamber, and ultimately, on the field, against the war-mongering West in defence of peace and the sacred rights of free nations!

All these manœuvres would be pursued to make the most of the time gap which must occur before Stalin felt powerful enough to attack the West. While the East was kindled into flame, he would patiently build up his armaments for his assault on the Western democracies: he would master the secret of the atomic bomb, and strike only when he was fully convinced that his strength was too great for defeat. But, whatever chaos he might create in the East, the West would remain his foremost objective, as, indeed, it had been since he first adopted the goal of world revolution.

At about this period, Mikoyan put forward a proposal which must have flabbergasted the Politbureau considerably. His idea was that the U.S.S.R. should devote all its strength and resources to bettering the conditions of its own peoples, so that the Soviet system might be seen by the world as an example of enlightened human progress. By this means, Mikoyan urged, the earth's masses might well become wholehearted converts to Communism, simply because it appeared to offer them a better life than they had ever enjoyed under capitalism. He was quite convinced that Molotov's policy of territorial "liberation" by the Red

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Army was mortally dangerous to Russia, and would, at length, recoil upon the Hydra heads of the Politbureau. The efforts of the fraternal Communist Parties had failed dismally, he considered, merely because they had sought to use violent methods of disrupting civilised life. The Central Committee, by instructing them to create chaos wherever they existed, had effectively ensured their almost complete lack of public support.

To the best of my knowledge, no single member nor candidate member of the Politbureau supported Mikoyan's ideas. It is not surprising.

A second speaker at the underground conference dealt with various aspects of the U.S.S.R.'s war preparations. He was an expert of the highest calibre—one of the chief members of the PDPR Central Committee in the Soviet Army. His conclusions, which, to a large extent, confirmed those of the previous speaker, were as follows :

For at least five years—until 1952, that was—the U.S.S.R. would not be strong enough to engage in any war with a major Power, least of all with the U.S.A. During that period, Stalin would stomach any provocation without recourse to arms. The years would be spent in rigorous preparation. All military staffs and organisations would be systematically overhauled, in order to prevent any conceivable recurrence of incidents which had degraded the Soviet cause in the last war—the defection of Vlasov's army to the Germans, the voluntary mass surrender of whole units of the Red forces. Food stocks would be built up on the expectation of a five years' conflict. Concentrated work would proceed on the atomic bomb, and on the development of various rocket planes and weapons initiated by German scientists. Particular attention would be paid to the provision of long-distance aircraft, constructed to carry battalions of paratroops, and to the manufacture of planes to transport atom bombs. Fifth columns of Communist sympathisers would be controlled and encouraged in every country where their " nuisance value " could be beneficial to the Red Army's cause.

The significance which the Politbureau attached to these objectives was emphasised by the fact that the general control of all steps towards their fulfilment was placed in the hands of Beriya, supreme chief of the secret police and

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security forces. This ensured an end to all obstacles. Beriya had his own methods of getting things done, and failure to co-operate with him was called to swift account. His sole answer to all "labour problems" and "industrial discontent" was exile to Siberia and lingering torture and death in a concentration camp. If the price to be paid for martial strength was hundreds of thousands of workers' lives, there it was: workers were "expendable" in a good cause!

## CHAPTER VIII

### I escape from Berlin

**I** MUST now return to my own affairs in Germany. When I was officially released from any further activity concerning the Tank case, I was given the routine duties of a senior officer attached to SVAG. The MVD, however, still dogged my footsteps, night and day. I became increasingly depressed and furious at their attentions, as well as at the spectacle of high-ranking Soviet officials shamelessly enriching themselves at the Germans' expense.

At length, I felt as though I could not stand life in Germany any longer. I wrote a long report, asking firmly to be released from further work abroad, and requested permission to return to my former scientific activities in Moscow.

SVAG turned down the application. "We need you in Berlin more than they need you in the U.S.S.R.," said General Dratvin. "I know you're being harassed a good deal by the MVD, but why on earth let that worry you? They harass us all!"

Marshal Vershinin rebuked me soundly for having sought a transfer from Germany, and, when I approached Vasili Stalin on the matter, that amiable young man merely said blankly: "But Father wants you to stay here!"

Though they would not sanction a home posting for me, the authorities at length agreed that I might spend a month's leave in Moscow. I left with all speed. In the capital, I plunged into underground activity, and, among other secret ventures, attended the conference I have mentioned in the previous chapter.

A few days after this meeting, my friends and I received some extremely disquieting news. There was every reason to believe that a number of underground leaders were on the point of being apprehended by the MVD.

We received the grim details at one in the morning, and by six o'clock I had left on a plane for Berlin. I did not even wait to take leave of my sister. This, without question, was the riskiest journey I had ever embarked upon in my life. I carried documents which would have ensured my instant

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arrest and death, had they been found on me. Happily, I got through without any hindrance.

I need hardly say that my sudden return to Berlin was made with full approval of my friends in the underground organisation, and was dictated solely by the desire to help the leaders concerned. Unfortunately, I cannot divulge the reasons which made the step imperative. Several people connected with my efforts to put the MVD off the track remain in the German capital to this day. I can only say that I did my best to ease the perilous position which had arisen.

Unfortunately, I could not avert the catastrophe we dreaded. A further group of underground heroes perished defiantly. Another sword of freedom dropped from murdered hands into the Soviet inferno. Another chapter in the tragic tale of resistance to Communist tyranny was completed. But the story goes on, and its ending no man can foresee.

During the month of October, 1947, I was directly warned on no less than four occasions, by a friend of mine who was closely connected with Party circles and who had daily access to secret documents, that the MVD net was closing in upon me. It seemed that I was directly suspected of having prepared a crop of anti-Stalinist leaflets which had recently appeared in Moscow. My friend showed me a photostat of the compromising evidence gathered against me. It was piffle from first to last, but, under the Soviet regime, such things do not matter.

My companions in the underground movement strongly advised me to send my family back to Moscow, so that, if the worst came to the worst, I could "go to earth" somewhere in the depths of Russia, or even escape to the West, without having to leave them alone in Berlin; but I rejected the suggestion. It was, above all, necessary for me to keep a cool head, and, had I despatched my wife and daughter back to the U.S.S.R., the secret police might well have interpreted the gesture as one of panic. Besides, the notion of flight did not appeal to me. My friends and I had never considered that an escape abroad did much honour to a political fighter. It was running away, not only from the Kremlin's tyranny, but also from the battlefield on which the struggle for liberty was waged. Every man worth his

salt was needed in that struggle—particularly people with my hard experience of the regime.

Furthermore, I reflected, an escape to the West would present the authorities with an ideal opportunity of labelling me an enemy of the people, a spy and a traitor—charges which I should have no chance to refute.

There were other factors which weighed against the idea of flight. I knew too much about Russian emigrés to wish to become one of them! I had read their publications, and had made a special study of the best journal they produced, the *Socialist Courier* (New York). I had met several of them in Berlin, and had exchanged long conversations with them on various matters affecting the U.S.S.R. And I had reached the conclusion that, in the main, they lacked all comprehension of the true significance of current events, and were thirty years or so behind the times. Thus, to join them in voluntary exile seemed to me a retrogressive step, a leap into that past.

In addition to all this, a shadow had been cast over the very word "emigré" by the specimens we had encountered in Hitler's, Mussolini's and Antonescu's ranks during the war. Some of these Russians had behaved no better towards their own people than had the Germans. I knew one who, masquerading in the uniform of a Nazi Major, had been the very worst kind of human brute. And, though we might forgive the emigrés their ignorance of life in the Soviet Union, we could not condone the open betrayal of their country practised by such renegades as these.

Men of this persuasion did enormous harm to the whole emigré cause. They were by no means representative of the main body of Russians abroad, but their example stank in the nostrils of all good patriots. For a handful of Reichsmarks, they sold themselves to the Fascists, hoping, no doubt, that a German victory would give them the opportunity of restoring the Tsarist tyranny throughout Russia.

There were dangers, too, of any Soviet citizen who escaped into a foreign country being dubbed a "Vlasovite." Vlasov's forces, during the war, had turned their arms against Stalin on the side of Germany, and the Politbureau, having tried and failed to withhold the news from the population, had proceeded to paint the Vlasovites as the most unspeakable variety of bandits and traitors. Vlasov

himself was referred to as a ruffianly Fascist and White Guard. And, needless to say, a good deal of this propagandist pitch stuck. The Russian people, fighting for their lives in defence of their Fatherland, could find little sympathy in their hearts for soldiers who had deserted to the ranks of a tyrant like Hitler, even in protest against the equally monstrous demagogue, Joseph Stalin.

It was only after the war had ended that I discovered that many of my colleagues at the Academy had joined the Vlasov movement. The grief of their wives, their parents and even their children was tragic to see. One old man, with tears streaming down his face, told me he could have borne any shame but this, that his only son had been a Vlasovite.

In the town of Serpukhovo, I saw a large batch of Vlasovites who had been taken prisoners, and I shall never forget the revulsion they inspired in the local inhabitants. It exceeded the disgust aroused by captured S.S. men.

Apart from the prospect of losing all practical touch with affairs in Russia, and of being regarded as a Vlasovite, I did not relish the notion of becoming an inmate of a Displaced Persons' Camp, as would probably transpire if I escaped to the West. I did not want to leave my post in the ranks of the underground movement, and I certainly did not want to condemn my relations to the vengeance usually wreaked on the families of those who had fled abroad. Thus, when my friend gave me his third warning, I told him point-blank that I would not consider running away from Berlin. "Why should I save my own skin, and leave my friends and relations to face the music?" I demanded.

"Because there is no other way out," he insisted, "I'll explain to everybody concerned that you had no choice."

"I will not do it," I said.

"Then what *are* you going to do?"

"We must try and find some means of averting my arrest."

"Nothing on earth can prevent your arrest," he said gravely. And he went on to explain at some length, that my position was indeed a hopeless one.

On the night of October 26th, my wife and I burned a large number of "incriminating" books I had purchased in Germany—works by Bukharin, Trotsky and Kautsky

among many others. I disposed of Kautsky's *Terrorism and Communism* and Aronson's *At the Dawn of the Red Terror* so ingeniously that I have every hope that they are being read by opposition fighters to this day. I also passed on my copies of the emigré *Socialist Courier* into safe hands.

On October 28th, in the middle of the night, I was summoned to the MGB Directorate, and led into the office of General Melnikov. Nobody could have supposed from his manner that the faintest suspicion was harboured against me. He was, indeed, charming in every way. But, in the middle of our conversation, he made an apparently accidental reference to a member of the underground movement who wrote under the name of "Demokratov" and who had for long been a thorn in the side of the Politbureau. No doubt, he hoped that I would give him some information concerning the true identity of this intrepid rebel. If so, he was disappointed.

The following morning, I received the fourth and final warning from my friend that, if I wished to escape with my life, I must arrange to disappear without further delay. Again I refused to consider the matter, saying that, by running away, I should be false to my underground compatriots and all that they stood for. Accordingly, he contacted various leaders of the opposition movement in the U.S.S.R., explained my obstinate viewpoint to them, and obtained from them full authority for me to make whatever decision I thought best, with an assurance that, if I decided to escape abroad, the action would not be held against me. But, at this juncture, owing to various moves behind the scenes by secret underground fighters in high positions, the tension was relaxed; the secret police decreased their surveillance over me, and the immediate necessity for me to vanish from Berlin was removed.

Then an extraordinary thing occurred. I was ordered back to Moscow—a fact which appeared to bewilder the MVD as much as it did me. At SVAG, various people assured me that the Politbureau's confidence in me was as great as ever, and that I was bound for great heights. But I knew better. I was quite convinced that a return to the capital would be suicide for me.

I set about the business of handing over my work to my



successor—a process which, under Communism, takes long and infinitely boring weeks. In due course, I received the necessary documents for my family and me to leave Berlin. Most of my furniture and other possessions were packed up, ready for our departure. Still, on one pretext or another, I hung on.

One day, when I was away from home, Red Army men arrived at my flat and removed my private telephone. They gave no explanations, and, when my wife told them that she would report them to me for their insolence, informed her brusquely that they “ couldn’t care less.”

I complained hotly about this treatment to SVAG’s Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Lukyanchenko. He said, without looking up, “ If they have taken your telephone, then the step was necessary.”

I went on to see the chief of the Telecommunications Directorate, Lieutenant General Borzov. His A.D.C. told me that the General was out, though I happened to know for a fact that he was working in his office.

I went to see General Dratvin, and was advised that he was engaged and could not receive me.

I called on General Aleksandrov. “ There is no need for you to have a telephone any longer,” he said ominously. “ A plane will be waiting to take you and your family to Moscow the day after tomorrow ! ”

When I tried to speak on the special line to Marshal Ver-shinin, the duty officer refused to allow me to do so. “ Strangers are not permitted to make use of this line ! ” he explained. Already I was a “ stranger ! ”

Soon after I reached home, Aleksandrov’s A.D.C. arrived with written orders for me to leave the city by air. I told him, in curt terms, to go to the devil, and said that I would make my own arrangements to proceed to Moscow in my own time. Somewhat to my surprise, Aleksandrov did not pursue the matter. It seemed evident that the authorities did not wish to have me arrested in Germany, but to pounce upon me on Soviet soil, where the whole thing could be carried out quietly and without undue publicity.

A few days later, however, my old enemy, Colonel Klykov, presented himself at my flat and demanded a meal. He talked to me in a thoroughly friendly manner, while my wife prepared some food.

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"I'm sorry to leave for Moscow," I said, "without knowing all the ins and outs of the 'Tank case.'"

He grinned, but did not reply.

When we had eaten, he made a tour of the flat, examining the few books which I had neither packed nor destroyed, opening cupboards, and generally poking his spy's nose into such remnants of my personal business as the place still contained. Then he cast his bulk into a large armchair; its upholstery, unknown to him, was packed with coded and uncoded papers referring to various underground activities. Had he tried to cut that chair's cover, I would have emptied my pistol at his fat head without any compunction. The evidence in the hidden papers could have hanged my friends in the opposition movement ten times over.

Happily, Klykov suspected nothing, and was clearly convinced that I was leaving for Moscow as instructed. For a short time, I breathed more easily, and devoted myself to searching for some means of transporting my wife and daughter to the Western Zone, in order to render them safe from whatever dire fate awaited me. Once they were secure, I did not mind what torture I might have to endure myself. I was only too well aware of the MVD's habit of tormenting a victim's relations before his eyes, for the purpose of wringing a false confession from him, and was fully determined that my own dear ones should not be forced to undergo such barbaric treatment.

While I was busy planning their escape, and while the authorities began to chafe at my renewed delay in leaving Berlin for Moscow, I began to consider whether I should not endeavour to share their flight to the West. It seemed vital to me that the world should be warned of the conspiracy being hatched against it in the Kremlin. And who was in a better position to acquaint the free peoples of the earth with this hideous threat to their liberty than I? Was I not, in all likelihood, the only man outside the Soviet ruling hierarchy who had learned from Stalin's own lips, from the mouths of Malenkov and Vosnesensky, the details of their infamous design to enslave the earth? Had I any moral right to keep such information to myself?

Which course would best serve the real interests of humanity? To retire underground in the U.S.S.R. and continue my mole's fight against the regime, until the inevit-

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able hour came when the MVD discovered me and put me to death in their dungeons, or to carry my message to the West, and warn the bearers of liberty of the peril in which they stood?

My flat in Warmbaderstrasse was closely and continuously watched by an armed guard: SVAG's Staff Komen-datura was only three hundred metres distant, and the houses on every side were occupied by Red Army officers.

But, despite these disadvantages, I must escape somehow. The point was, where? Should I attempt to hide temporarily among the Germans in the Soviet Zone, or cross straight into the Western sector and give myself up to the Americans or the British? I had already decided not to apply to the French—the Communists were strong in France at the time, and Thorez, Hitler's friend and Stalin's pupil, was in a position of considerable power.

Come to that, I reflected, the Americans and the British were still officially Allies of Stalin, and tied in many respects to the U.S.S.R. by the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. I knew that they had handed back quite a number of defectors from the Soviet ranks whom SVAG had alleged to be criminals. I had no wish to cause complications between these Allies-on-paper, and furthermore I had the mistaken notion that neither the British nor the Americans cared much for people with the liberal-democratic and republican views I myself professed.

Accordingly, I made contact, by indirect means, with a representative of a state entirely unconnected with the administration of Germany. I gave no information about myself, and naturally there was no question of a personal meeting between us. It seemed that he regarded me as a spy or a lunatic, for I received no word of any kind from him.

Meanwhile, the position was becoming desperate. The house which contained my flat was taken over by a German whom I knew to be an agent of the MVD. It looked as though the sands were running out. In desperation, I decided to make a personal approach to a representative of another foreign power. Under cover of darkness, wearing mufti, and with my hand on the butt of the pistol in my overcoat pocket, I stole unobserved from my flat, and made

my way, by a circuitous route which led me through many back gardens and vegetable plots, to the Western sector of the city. Here I saw the official concerned, and asked him point blank whether he could afford protection to my family and myself, and, if possible, secure our right of way over the zonal border into Western Germany.

"But you must tell me who you are!" he said.

"I'm a human being, and that should suffice" I answered curtly.

"How can I do anything for you, if you won't even reveal your identity?" he asked. "You speak to me in German, and I have no idea what your real nationality is. But my country has diplomatic relations with almost every country under the sun, and certain loyalties have to be observed." It was evident that he thought me a spy, like my previous contact.

We went on talking, and at length he agreed to give me a definite reply on the following day. There was nothing more I could do for the moment, and I made my way back to my flat by an even wilder and more zig-zag route than before.

I 'phoned him from a call-box at the Silesian Station the next morning. He reaffirmed that he could do nothing to help me himself, but added that he had been in touch with the foreign representative I had first approached, and that the latter seemed disposed to grant me his aid.

I left the station, and made my way to a totally different district. Here I surprised an elderly German by accosting him and saying, "If you will go into that telephone box, dial this number, and ask certain questions for me, I will give you three hundred marks!" At first, he merely stared at me in confusion, but I adopted a typically Soviet air of severity, and soon he meekly went into the box and repeated the words I had drummed into his grey head.

"What did they reply?" I asked him when he emerged, still blinking in some bewilderment.

"They said they are expecting Mr. X," he answered.

I thrust three hundred-mark notes into his hand, and he almost fainted. Such generosity to a German from a Soviet officer was unheard of. I told him to keep on walking along the road until he reached a certain point, and then to turn right. It was clear that he thought I intended to shoot him

through the back of the head. He doddered away obediently until he reached the spot I mentioned, however, then ran for his life.

Late that night, I changed again into mufti, and made my way by devious ways to a bus stop on the very fringe of the Soviet sector. I boarded a vehicle and travelled for quite a distance; then caught another bus going in the opposite direction, passing my house in the process. Next I took a tram, and then, being fairly certain that I had shaken off any MVD men set to follow me, made my way on foot through a number of back streets to the Western area of the city.

I reported, as "Mr. X" to the foreign representative whom I had first telephoned. He received me politely enough, but, in view of my obstinate refusal to inform him of my real name or nationality, told me that he could do nothing for me directly, though he would put my case before an official of yet another State.

On the way home, I called in to see some German friends of mine, and was twice on the point of telephoning the office of General Clay, the American Commander in Chief, to ask whether I could obtain sanctuary in the U.S. Zone, but, on each occasion, some last minute intuition held me back. Instead, I rang the private number of a member of the Control Council who spoke excellent Russian.

"I need help badly," I said.

"Who are you?"

"I am merely a human being who is desperately in need of your aid. Can you do anything for me?"

"It depends upon what you want me to do, and, above all, upon your identity."

"I have said I am a human being. I know you, and you know me."

"I know a great many people," he said, and replaced the receiver.

I went to see a German, whom I will call Doctor T., and frankly explained the facts of my position. Would he, I asked, arrange for my wife and child to find shelter with some of his relatives in Western Berlin?

"I can't do it . . ." he said. "I get on well with the Russians, and I don't want to be disloyal. . . ."

I reminded him of the fact that I had saved his life in

1945, and he shook his head in a harassed manner. "I know, I know . . ." he said wretchedly. "But I daren't risk it. . . ."

After quite a number of disillusioning episodes of this nature, things suddenly took a turn in my favour. I cannot divulge the full details of what occurred. I will only say that my last, desperate approach to a foreign Power met with complete success. Freedom awaited me.

The day fixed for my final dash for liberty dawned brightly. It was only then that I told my wife of my plans for us to "disappear," not because I did not trust her implicitly, but simply because I had not wished to worry her with details of the full peril in which I stood. Her reaction to the news was typical of her. She faced a journey into an unknown future, with all its attendant dangers, without question or demur. Tears dimmed her lovely eyes as she told me she would go anywhere, so long as we able to stay together.

I proceeded with my plans. To my great regret I was compelled to tell a completely fictitious story to my neighbour, Frau Gorsdorf, for whom my wife and I held the warmest regard.

It was also necessary to deceive my chauffeur, Herr Binder, a good and honest man. Taking advantage of his absence on a false errand, my wife and I threw some things into the car, and set off, with our small daughter, for the Western Zone. So hurried was our departure that I discovered, some hours later, that I was wearing a pair of odd shoes!

I was careful to take nothing with me save personal belongings. I even left my Service pistol behind. I had no intention of giving the MVD the remotest chance of accusing me of making away with public property. Luckily, I had bought my car myself.

The official pass which still remained on the windscreen acted as a talisman throughout our journey. Soviet road barriers opened like magic before us, and, the following morning, we were far beyond the Russian boundaries.

As I drove towards the West and freedom, my feelings were mixed. I was not afraid of the future. I had never been a coward, and the worst that could happen would be re-capture by the MVD, operating through agents in the

Allied Zone Though I had left my pistol in Berlin, I had another means of ensuring that I should not fall into their hands alive. No, it was not fear that brought unaccustomed tears to my eyes, but the realisation that, in order to serve my country to the best of my ability, I had to sever all connection with it, leaving my aged mother, my friends, the Moscow I loved, for long years, possibly for ever.

Yet I could not feel that I was guilty of betraying the ideals which had always inspired the members of my family. We Tokaevs had fought persistently for liberty throughout our history. To a man, we were devoted to justice and opposed to despotism. None of us had ever pursued a career entirely for personal ends.

My father had worked for the revolution with burning hope, faith and energy. My brothers had joined the Communist Party in order to fight for the establishment of a genuine Socialism, based on the individual's inherent right to freedom. My wife had been a member of the Pioneer and Komsomol movements, becoming a specialist in chemistry in a Soviet organisation.

I myself, the youngest of four brothers, had been brought up in an atmosphere of social upheaval. I remembered having to flee with my family from the "White Guard" counter-revolutionaries. I recalled the first world war, the two great risings of 1917, the ghastly famine of 1921. I had started work for the Soviet State at an age when I should still have been playing with the toys of childhood.

I had passed through the Marxist mill; I had spent long years in various Party activities; I had risen to high rank in the Red Army, on the grounds of my scientific knowledge. I had received official recognition for my work, and had lived, on the whole, a good deal better than most people in the U.S.S.R. slave-state. I was not running away, therefore, to ease my personal lot, but merely because, as a genuine son of the people. This reflection warmed my heart.

I should perhaps say here, in passing, that it is totally wrong to suppose that every man in Soviet uniform, or even in the drab garb of the MVD, is a traitor to the true interests of his nation. The many warnings I had received of my impending arrest had come, in nearly every instance, from members of the secret police who were still patriots at heart. And, when I had started out on my last journey from Berlin,

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I had been followed for a time by the car of a SVAG official, who, in effect, had "seen me off": we had exchanged signals of farewell on our hooters!

Thus it was that I became a "criminal," punishable, under Stalin's laws, by lingering torture followed by execution. In the U.S.S.R. I should henceforth be regarded as a traitor and saboteur, an "enemy of the people." But to be called an "enemy of the people" by those whose existence is dedicated to making the life of the people intolerable is a compliment: since the title is always bestowed, in the Soviet Union, upon those who fight for human freedom, it has become, if anything, a symbol of honour.

Before leaving Berlin, I had posted a letter to Marshal Sokolovsky which had made my feelings clear. It read:—

"Esteemed Vasili Danilovich,

You know better than anyone else that I have always done my duty in the Service, and that I have never been a self-seeker. All of us must be true to ourselves—and I am being true to myself in the action I take now.

As one soldier to another, I ask you only to believe one thing—I have never been associated with espionage in any form. Never! If you or the rest accuse me of having been a spy, you will be insulting me most grievously and falsely.

My reason for leaving is simply this: I cannot agree in any single particular with the policy of the Kremlin, which you are so vigorously implementing. I beg you to ask yourself a question—is it better to be a Soldier of the People or merely a Marshal of the Soviet Union bent on fulfilling the will of tyrants?

If you decide that you are on a false course, then you and I will be soldiers in the same Army—an Army whose sole objective is freedom.

One last thing—do not label me as a 'deserter.' Deserters are cowards, and I have never been guilty of cowardice. I am not running away from the fight, but plunging into the very thick of it.

Remember, the last word is always said by



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the people. And the people will neither forget nor forgive those who rob them of liberty.

With sincere regards,  
(Sgd.) G. Tokaev."

Soon after I had reached my destination, I sent further letters, explaining my attitude and the reasons for my departure, to Stalin himself, to Zhdanov, to the Central Committee of the Party, to the SED headquarters, to the Cominform newspaper and to the French Communist organ, *Humanité*. I then got into touch with the foreign Press, and a notice concerning me appeared in the *New York Times* on September 1st, 1948. This was followed by much publicity in other Western papers, and, on September 6th, I addressed a Press conference in London. At this gathering, the Tass Agency representative, typically enough, could find nothing more intelligent to shout at me than: "How much did they pay you for your treachery?"

No word about me appeared in the Soviet Press, though the London *Daily Worker* did its best to blackguard me by claiming that I was not an officer of the Red Army at all, and, furthermore, that my name was not even Tokaev!

But my name is my own, and I have no cause to disguise it. I am no criminal, and there is no reason why I should attempt to conceal my identity or to hide myself from the world. If I, and men like me, stay silent, our peoples will continue to bear the yoke of Stalinism for another thirty years or more. Whatever the risk, we must speak. Better to die for the truth than to live in a world of lies created by the thirteen tyrants of the Kremlin.



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