

RALPH PARKER

*Conspiracy
Against Peace*

NOTES
OF AN
ENGLISH JOURNALIST

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AGAINST PEACE**

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C O N T E N T S

	<i>Page</i>
FOREWORD	5
CHAPTER I	
Early Days	15
CHAPTER II	
Treachery at Munich	23
CHAPTER III	
In Occupied Prague	38
CHAPTER IV	
Secret Diplomacy in the Balkans	52
CHAPTER V	
Journey to the Soviet Union	67
CHAPTER VI	
While Russia Fought	82

	<i>Page</i>
CHAPTER VII	
The People Set Their Landmarks	114
CHAPTER VIII	
Whither Germany?	140
CHAPTER IX	
Behind the Embassy Windows	181
CHAPTER X	
For Peace—Against War	238

FOREWORD

A serene and cloudless sky reigned over Moscow on Victory Day. Crowds of people, drawn to the centre of the city, filled Red Square, moving through dazzling patches of sunshine and the long shadows of the Kremlin towers. They spilled out into Manège Square, into the Alexandrovsy Garden where a pale network of rays of the setting sun quivered through the tender green foliage. They spread far up Gorky Street, flowing into the squares and streets of the Soviet capital.

Standing in Red Square that May day, after the guns had crashed in salute to Victory, I felt as if on the edge of a vast and deep sea whose waters had found quiet and calm after a great storm. Millions had waited for this moment. The silent watchers on Rybachi's craggy coast, warriors resting after battle among the bluebells, clover and wild carnation—all the humble flowers of the Russian steppe, women haggard from loneliness and heavy work, girls with looped pigtails who had

yearned so hard to change their rough uniforms for light spring frocks, peasants hungry for the scent of their native fields—all these millions of people had dreamed of that peaceful labour which had come to the country at the hour of Victory.

“We are victorious”—the words echoed the length and breadth of the vast Soviet land. And these words were not an empty boast in the hour of triumph, they were voiced by those who had gone into battle believing their cause to be just. How many days of anguish, how many heights taken by storm, how many ravines and paths perilously cleared of mines, how many convoys driven under a hail of bombs, how many leagues of Russian land, Polish land, Balkan land, German land traversed between the first and the last hours of the war! Victory had been won at the cost of great sacrifice, at the cost of the blood and sufferings of the Soviet people. Here in Red Square on Victory Day I thought of that immeasurable gratitude which mankind owed the Soviet Union for saving the world from Hitlerism.

Now with victory and peace already within their grasp, people began to think again of the future.

I joined the students grouped around the monument of Lomonosov before the Moscow University. Of all who celebrated that day they, perhaps, felt most keenly that victory had re-

stored to them the bright perspectives of peaceful toil and creative research.

They pressed closely around their teachers, happily but quite seriously questioning them about the future.

The mood of these youths was of surging happiness as they thought of a future that only yesterday the enormous evil of the war had obscured.

On Mokhovaya Street I pushed my way through the crowd of Moscovites and reached the building of the American Embassy. At a closed window stood the tall figure of George F. Kennan, minister at the U.S.A. Embassy in Moscow. He was watching the crowd silently, standing in a position where he could not be seen from below. The hubbub was fainter now, muffled to an insistent murmur.

I noticed that as Kennan watched the stirring scene his face wore a curiously petulant, irritated look. Then, turning from the window with the last glance at the crowd, he said grimly:

“They are cheering. . . . They think the war is over, but it's only just beginning.”

Before I left the embassy I noticed that instead of the portrait of Roosevelt—his assertive head with its flashing smile had previously dominated the room—the portrait of Truman hung on the wall.

On that day I paid little attention to Kennan's words, but now, after four years, they

are engraved on my memory as deeply as anything I saw and heard on Victory Day, with the people pouring into Moscow from the suburbs, the reunion of those who had made solemn promises "to meet when the war was over," the sincere and friendly manifestations of the desire of the Soviet people for peaceful co-operation with their wartime allies.

Events that have occurred since that sacred day have shown me that those words, muttered by an American diplomatist on Victory Day, were a denial of that policy of friendly co-operation. Diplomats make a practice of hiding what they really think under what they say. But this time Kennan spoke from conviction.

That he was not alone in the views he held I began to discover when a few months later I returned to England. The English people, guided by feelings of sincere friendliness for the Soviet people, had voted for a party whose election programme promised co-operation with the Soviet Union, and in the autumn of 1945 had not yet realized that Ernest Bevin's policy was nothing but a continuation of the old discredited Churchillian anti-Soviet policy of "containing Communism" by a ring of hostile states on the borders of the Soviet Union. This policy was the motivating force of Churchill's attempts to retard the second front and divert it to the Balkans, preferring to prolong

the war than see the spread of Soviet influence. And was it not inherent in the decision taken to drop the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, two days before the Soviet Union went to war with Japan, a decision which the British Professor Blackett has suggested was "not so much the last military act of the second world war, as the first act of the cold diplomatic war with Russia"?

In 1945 the British people still believed that the newly elected Labour Government would put an end to this shameful policy. But in official London circles no such illusions were to be found. The Foreign Office and those newspapers which can be relied on to reflect its views, whatever government is in power, were mainly concerned with destroying the great popularity of the Soviet Union with the British working class. No means, however dubious, were neglected to discredit the Soviet Union and its army. The slightest incident was inflated and prominently publicized by the BBC. All kinds of "Russian experts," specialists in slander of the Soviet Union before World War II, were taken out of cold storage by their diplomatic masters.

However, in those days Labour Members of Parliament still considered it advisable to pay lip-service to their party's election pledges in order to take advantage of the English people's sympathies for Russia. The time when the Labour Party was expelling members for

no other reason than that they spoke and acted in accordance with the party's pre-election pledges, when it was tenfold more dangerous for a Labour member to attend a congress devoted to the cause of peace than to support the "United Europe" movement, fathered by Churchill and designed to facilitate America's domination of Europe—that time had not yet come. It began, when at Fulton (Missouri, U.S.A.) Churchill took over Goebbels' ugly "iron curtain" phrase and, in the presence of President Truman, called for the creation of an Anglo-American anti-Soviet bloc, against which no official voice was raised in Britain.

The subservience of British to American interests was never so evident as in the German problem. There is now not a shadow of doubt that the ruling circles in U.S.A. and England have made the revival of Germany's military potential for a future war against U.S.S.R. their primary objective in Europe.

The failure of the British Government to adopt an independent foreign policy in the country's interest has had results no less disastrous for the British people than they are dangerous for the peace of the world. The "Marshallization" of Britain has reached a point when prominent Americans no longer conceal their intention of guiding Britain's economic life towards a point when in that land and its Empire conditions are favourable for American capital investment. In other

words, "socialization" must be co-ordinated with the interests of the American capitalists.

That position of Great Britain in her attitude towards America in the war "which is only just beginning" was made plain to all when, on April 4, 1949, Bevin went to Washington to sign the North-Atlantic pact. In so doing, as the progressive American writer Jessica Smith commented, the British and U.S. governments signed a war treaty against their greatest ally in World War II before concluding a peace treaty with their main enemy in that war.

What does this pact amount to? Is its significance summed up by the title of the Gershwin song "It Don't Mean Nothin'," which an American military band was playing in the hall a few moments before President Truman arrived to attend the signature ceremony?

Peace-loving people cannot regard this pact so lightheartedly.

The Atlantic pact divides the world for war instead of uniting it for peace. Subscribing to a pact which, by its very nature, constitutes an elaborately worked out threat to peace, the governments of U.S.A., Britain, and the other signatory powers have dealt a blow to the United Nations which none of their lip-service to peace can conceal.

The North-Atlantic pact is directed primarily against the Soviet Union and the countries of People's Democracy, but it is also di-

rected against democratic liberties within those countries that have signed it, it is directed against the people of my own country.

The pact, a military alliance aimed against the Soviet Union, is in direct conflict with the British-Soviet Treaty of Collaboration and Mutual Assistance, according to which England pledged herself not to conclude "any alliance and not to take part in any coalition, directed against the other High Contracting Power." No amount of quibbling over words can conceal the fact that the Military Staff Committee at Fontainebleau in France, is planning for war against the Soviet Union.

Such are the principal events of recent years that have caused me to remember the words of the American diplomat Kennan spoken on that day when the Soviet people were celebrating victory. "The war is only just beginning. . . ." That "cold war"—even the terminology of the struggle bears the slick American stamp—has already claimed its victims. I am not referring to such as James Forrestal who, seeking to terrify the world, succeeded only in driving himself into a frenzy of mortal fear. It is the working class of the West who are having to bear the cost of their governments' military plans, and in the first place of my own country, England, where a long overdue relief from austerity of living is being retarded, if not indefinitely postponed.

It is the working class of England, the inhabitants of the crowded industrial areas, which would bear the heaviest burden of suffering were the British Isles to be the Malta of a future war, as American strategists of atomic warfare are planning that it should be.

The Atlantic pact and other manifestations of the aggressive intentions of the Anglo-American imperialists are motivated by a myth created on purpose—the myth of the danger of Soviet aggression. As a journalist who has spent some eight years in the Soviet Union, I consider it my duty to my own country to oppose my own observations to the evil inventions of the warmongers.

The English people ought to know the truth about those among them who are betraying their interests and the cause of peace.

It required long and difficult experience for me to learn the truth. I was brought up in a middle-class environment ignorant of much of the stern reality of life and had to pass through the school of experience in order to understand the truth.

For 15 years I have been working as a correspondent of English newspapers in Europe. During that time the development of British foreign policy has been constantly before my eyes and from year to year I have seen it as increasingly reactionary. I believe that this policy is created and executed against the interests of the majority of my countrymen and

that it has led them through the Munich capitulation to the Atlantic pact.

I shall tell the story of my life as a journalist in Europe, since this may help the reader to see in its true colours the anti-democratic policy of those who are betraying peace and dragging mankind to new sufferings in a new world war.

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

On the surface, the Lancashire coastal town where I was born was a place of almost idyllic happiness. It was reputed to be one of the sunniest and healthiest towns in the north of England. But the advantages of its climate were enjoyed only by well-to-do merchants, manufacturers and brokers from Liverpool and Manchester.

These citizens clung to the belief—not without good reason—that their absence from their warehouses or offices meant that others were enriching themselves at their expense.

One of my earliest memories is of our town during those morning hours when the businessmen were off to their jobs. Between 7 and 8 the streets would be thronged with young men whose feet were still on the lower rungs of social advancement, clerks and bookkeepers hurrying to the railway station to take their customary seats in the train in which they sat, day

in day out, throughout the year, till advancement earned them the privilege of travelling by a later train. Half an hour later they were followed, at a slower pace, by their bosses. These pillars of middle-class respectability were distinguished by their grave and anxious looks and by the fact that they always walked alone. It was as though, once out of their homes, they were already absorbed in the hurly-burly of competitive money-making. Company directors travelled even later, and were usually brought to the station in their motor-cars. They were at the very top of the ladder, envied by all those of our town who hoped to emulate them.

There was much in our town that looked "respectable" until one looked behind the curtains of its trim and tidy houses. The English middle class knows how to keep its family skeletons well concealed, and it was some time before I came to suspect that all was not as it appeared to be in our little world. The quiet streets, smoothly asphalted and lined with gardens, the front doors with their gleaming brass tablets "No Beggars, No Hawkers," the sober, restrained house-fronts—were they not the outward signs of a stable society, in which "dignity and probity" reigned, a rebuke to "the vulgarity, the unreliability" of the poor? Certainly, I was expected to accept that interpretation and when I was awarded a number of prizes at school, a clergyman assured me that

I already had a foot on the ladder of success. By success must be understood a detached house in a private garden, preferably facing south, a seat in a first-class railway carriage, and the means to get away from our town during the annual invasion of the trippers.

In that world of close-clipped lawns and outward respectability I had no friend. When I made one it was by chance and in the company of the Lancashire fishermen.

Thrusting out over the sands for fully a mile towards the shallow sea ran the pier. Even in the days when it was built the sea had been in retreat, leaving the pier's iron legs spangled with seaweed and gleaming mussels. Only a sandy trickle of waters crept over the shores, barely enough to carry away the jetsam. Scrambling one day down one of the rusty struts of the pier, my foot caught awkwardly and I shouted for help.

A boy ran up to me and helped me to climb down. We walked back together. He was, I reckoned, about 15. As he wiped the wet sand off his hands I noticed their roughness—like a worker's. He had on a pair of long trousers rolled up at the bottom and an open shirt with a great tear in the back. His feet were bare. He had a plain freckled face with a snub nose.

"Do you go to school?" I asked.

"Not now," he answered, and I recognized by his rough accent that he was a working-class boy.

"Where do you live?" I asked.

He named an industrial town in the West Pennines.

"What does your father do?" It was one of the first questions asked of a new boy at our school, and the reply had a good deal to do with the way he was treated afterwards.

"He works," my companion replied rather abruptly.

I felt uncomfortable. This was not a usual answer.

"What's your name?" he asked me suddenly. I told him. "Mine's Frank. Do you collect birds' eggs?"

We had reached a patch of dry sand with which I was familiar. It was the sand-artist's patch. Ever since I had first been taken to walk beside my uncle on the pier I had looked for the sand-artist. A cripple with an extraordinarily pale face, it was his practice to choose a smooth firm section of sand several yards square and with various wooden implements, to scratch a lace-like design representing a factory of fabulous size in a landscape of pit-shafts, smoking chimneys and row after row of workmen's cottages. The design was naive, revealing the artist's industriousness rather than any artistic talent, but the subject was one that pleased the captains of industry that strolled along the pier, and several used to pause to fling a few coppers into the square where the cripple wrote: "A victim of industry. Spare a penny." Every

day the sea washed this ephemeral picture away and every day he drew it again.

Frank and I were now near the cripple and, somewhat to my embarrassment, my companion began to talk to him. It transpired that the artist had been a foundryman at Platts engineering works where he had been disabled in an accident, and that Frank was now working at Platts as an apprentice.

Frank and I became close friends during the week he spent in our town. I admired his boldness, his disrespect for so many of the "standards of gentility" I had been brought up to observe, and above all his expertness in everything he turned his hands to.

That autumn I went to Oldham to spend a few days with Frank's parents. The Coopers' cottage was one of a row in a tight little group of cottages very closely built. The owner, the widow of a Manchester bank manager, had obviously given the builders instructions to pack as many cottages as possible into the few acres of moorland bought from the local landlord. Fields, surrounded by high stone walls, reached to the very edge of the hamlet. Beyond them the moors stretched as far as the eye could see to the misty crests of the broad-backed hills.

Looking back on those days I spent with the Coopers, it is their incorruptibility which strikes me as being the quality distinguishing them most from people I had hitherto met. The

Coopers had been industrial workers for at least five generations, since one of them had been driven by the confiscation of his patch of land to seek employment in Lancashire mills.

Frank's father kept a book in which in careful copper-plate script were penned the words of the songs the Lancashire weavers used to sing. It was a poetry created to the rattle and clicking of the looms, poetry through which ran the thread of English factory life.

Frank's father did not preach revolution to us. There was not a word of politics in the sense it was understood in our town. But I had met people incorruptibly loyal to their own class, people nourished on the culture of that class, proud of their victories, resolute before the struggle ahead. I learned the dignity of the worker, certain of his rights.

After this acquaintanceship with the Cooper family I began to notice the character of life in our town more attentively. My irritation grew at its unjustified self-satisfaction, its presumption and deceit.

To put an end to such "dangerous" thoughts my parents sent me to a boarding school, where nine-tenths of the pupils were from well-to-do families and the rest were the sons of shopkeepers.

The principal character of the education given in this school was the severity with which any spirit of initiative and independence among the pupils was crushed. A code of vexa-

tious, idiotic, unwritten laws prepared us for the conventions which we would have to respect in later life. Top-form boys, for example, were expected to carry their hats and only place them on their heads when it was necessary to salute a master by removing them again.

We were taught to regard the acquisition of knowledge as being of secondary importance to learning "social tone." Not content to withhold from us any explanation of current affairs, all knowledge of the most elementary political science—for that matter we were kept ignorant of the laws of natural science, including the biological processes—our school curriculum seemed to be deliberately designed to conceal all literature with a broad humane appeal. We were never shown the world in the changing stream of history. We read Corneille's tragedies line by line, we read the romantic poetry of de Musset and Lamartine, the prose of Daudet, but of Balzac, Zola and Maupassant not a word. Byron was a closed book to us. Of Dickens and Thackeray we were kept completely ignorant.

I have dwelt on these years of my childhood and schooling because it would be difficult to exaggerate the influence of middle-class education in shaping the outlook of the average Englishman. It is here in the middle-class schools that people are conditioned to respond to those appeals to "defend all that we hold dear," "Christian values," "the European heri-

tage," which reactionary politicians use to defend their selfish interests. Here are the forcing houses of racial intolerance and contempt for the working class. Every scrap of information about the Soviet Union is shamelessly distorted to inculcate hatred for the Soviet land.

My public-school education was continued at Cambridge. The day arrived when I had to set my foot on the broad way of life.

But already my last year at the university was clouded with anxiety about finding work at the end of my education. England lay in the grip of economic crisis, and gloomy prospects faced young people who looked for employment according to their qualifications in the early nineteen thirties.

After several years of half-employment, and sometimes simply of unemployment, I managed to get a job in a big Lancashire textile combine.

The office in which I worked was one of a long row of offices which had previously been concerned with the overseas market. Now they were all empty. An atmosphere of melancholy gloom pervaded the building, reminiscent of the state of England as a whole where economic life had come to a standstill.

In those days when Europe was moving into still sharper economic and political crisis I was invited to work on the continent for an English newspaper. In this way my journalistic career began.

CHAPTER II

TREACHERY AT MUNICH

It was in May 1934 that I first visited the countries of Eastern Europe as a foreign correspondent.

The sharp contrast between the lives of the rich and the poor in those lands leaped to the eyes of an observer even as little experienced as I was.

As I look back over the years to those pre-war visits to this area of bickering strife, my impressions group themselves into contrasting scenes. The intoxicating luxury of Budapest's Gellert Bath is linked with a memory of the ragged-clothed inhabitants of the city outskirts; a birthday party on a great estate beside the Tisza I remember together with the flimsy dwellings of the landless peasantry. I remember the pomp of Esztergom Cathedral, the residence of the Hungarian cardinals, poised high above the Danube, and the cruel blow my host, a Papal Chamberlain, struck his

servant in the face when a fork was dropped. I remember a Hungary abundant with food, yet a Hungary starving, a Czechoslovakia exporting consumer goods to all corners of the world when a million and a half were unemployed. I remember the beautiful home in a magnificent garden where the English managers of the Trepca mines in Serbia lived; and the wasted bodies and feverish faces of malaria-racked workers as they came off the shift. I remember the ostentatious luxury, the wild extravagance and I remember, too, the sense of sullen brooding discontent with which the atmosphere was charged in the working-class quarters of Ujpest and Pankrac and Wiener-Neustadt.

The regimes in these Southeast European countries, created by Anglo-French influence as bulwarks against Bolshevism, continued to cold-shoulder the Soviet Union even when it was clear to all that neither France nor Britain could be relied on to provide adequate protection. Where the rising threat of Germany caused more realistic statesmen to come to terms with Moscow, the dominant class did everything it could to sabotage those arrangements. Great efforts were made to conceal the truth about the Soviet Union from the working class, lest a demand for real alliances with Russia should force a change of policy.

Travelling in lands which neighboured on the Soviet Union, and where there had always

been a strong sympathy for Russia, I found prejudice no less rife among the ruling circles than in England. The Catholic Church in Slovakia, and the Uniates in Sub-Carpathian Ukraine preached a furious intolerance towards Soviet Russia. One day, years before the outbreak of war, I heard the prominent fascist Josef Tiso preaching to a huge crowd of Slovak peasants in a churchyard near Bratislava. His sermon called for a holy crusade against Bolshevik Russia.

British diplomacy in Eastern Europe during the nineteen thirties counted a good deal on the peasant parties as the mainstay of the dictatorial regimes in many countries there. In Rumania all hopes were pinned on Maniu, the representative of the landlords and well-to-do farmers, who had opened the gates wide for the investment of foreign capital in his country. In him and those of his kind in other lands the diplomatists of Western Europe saw faithful supporters of bourgeois order in its struggle against the working class and the poor peasantry.

While supporting the Right-wing leadership of the peasant parties, the England of Baldwin and the France of Blum buttressed up the autocratic regimes of Admiral Horthy in Hungary, Prince Paul in Yugoslavia, King Carol in Rumania, etc.

A reactionary regime in Belgrade pursued a ruthless policy of Serbian aggrandizement at the expense of the other peoples of the land.

The settling of Serbian colonists on land taken from the Turkish landlords during the Balkan Wars prevented the local inhabitants from drawing any real benefit from the expulsion of the occupiers. To curb any manifestations of discontent a dictatorial police rule was imposed. After the lively atmosphere of Belgrade, a visit to the provinces left an impression of utter silence, the result not only of the contrast between stupendous mountain and remote village, but of a police rule that practically forbade any movement between one village and another. The main roads, ribboning the poplar-spired plains, or zigzagging up the rugged limestone mountains, were as well maintained as any chief of staff could desire. But they were little used.

In every Macedonian town—Bitolj, Tetovo, Skoplje—racial hatred and national intolerance thrived apparently with the encouragement of the ruling circles.

Traditional political parties were not capable of solving these artificially created conflicts. But in the country there was an increasing number of people who were dissatisfied with the situation and who were striving to establish a new political and social regime which would bring to Macedonia equality and unity.

These smouldering fires and hopes for a new era could indeed be seen in other parts of Europe besides Macedonia.

In 1937, with the battle for Madrid raging,

I heard its echoes in the industrial suburbs of Vienna, at meetings in Bratislava, in the villages of Moravia, and even in the quiet Sussex country district where I spent my holidays. In each case the effect of the Spanish war had inevitably led to a sharpening of class differences. The men who volunteered for the International Brigade were those who had learned to fight for working-class interests in the arenas of political struggle in their own countries. For them the march of the British unemployed that began at John o'Groat's ended on the Jarama Hills, in University City in Madrid. Great as was the aid of the foreign volunteers to the cause of the Spanish Republicans, it was out-measured by the encouragement they gave to the forces of progress in their own lands.

Few in the sleepy old Sussex town, huddled under the walls of a Gothic castle, were able to follow the course of events in Spain at all closely, but the workers of the district were applying the lessons of Spain to their own conditions.

It became known in this little quiet town that it was one of the local gentry who had flown Franco from the Canary Islands to Spanish Morocco, enabling him to launch his attack on the young Spanish Republic. There were no more than a dozen people present at a routine meeting of the local co-operative society, called to deal with some humdrum business concerning the operation of the store

in the market place. Old Mrs. Elliott who never read a newspaper and whose interests, till then, seemed to be confined to the condition of her fruit trees and the health of her numerous grandchildren; two or three transport workers of Labourite views who set an example by their regular attendance at this primary political organization; a couple of intellectuals living beyond their means and forever in debt, and a handful of housewives usually concerned with parish-pump gossip. But that evening the meeting was galvanized into unusual animation.

The battle for Madrid had shifted to Sussex. They talked of restrictions, some severe, some petty, imposed by the landlord. They complained of the local authorities, of the inadequacy of the school and local hospital. And for once they were in fighting mood. They recognized that the struggle in Spain was their struggle, and that the man who had carried Franco to his African springboard was their enemy.

Six years later another airman came to the town, flying in low over the Downs from the sea. He dropped a stick of bombs that straddled the school buildings. Some forty children were killed, among them one of Mrs. Elliott's grandchildren.

The issues involved in the Czechoslovak crisis of 1938 were less clear-cut than those of the Spanish war. Public opinion had been

thoroughly mystified and confused by the British Government, whose agents in Prague knew that however deeply the national feelings of most Czechs had been outraged by the surrender to Hitler, those who represented the powerful interests of the banks and heavy industries were ready to place their private interests first and to acquiesce in the loss of national independence. It was not difficult for Chamberlain's government to persuade the British public that the Czechs were willing partners in the policy of appeasing Hitler.

But the most important factor in determining the attitude of broad circles in Britain towards the Czechoslovak events in 1938 was the false picture of the Soviet Union that was being dangled before them. The compliance of a very strong section of the ruling class towards the rise of Nazism in Germany was accompanied with a revival of the campaign of hoodwinking the public about the real strength of the Soviet Union.

At that time I was working in England and saw that the people's lack of knowledge about the real situation was being used just the same way as it had been for years in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, in order to create an inflated idea of the power of the local reactionary governments.

Some of the organizers of this campaign were simply fools so blinded by class prejudice that they readily accepted the reports of mili-

tary attachés in British embassies in Europe that the Red Army was feeble and Russia a fourth-rate military power.

Others were certainly not of that opinion though they miscalculated that Russia, if dangerously strong, was less strong than Germany. Both these groups, however, shared the belief that it was necessary to hide from the English people the truth about the Soviet Union and its friendly relations to Czechoslovakia.

It cannot be said that they were wholly successful. I remember how lively was the public's response to a leading article in the popular English newspaper "The Daily Mirror" after the signing of the Munich agreement: "What of Russia? Complete silence. Do we snub and ignore this mighty nation whose support was so welcome but 24 hours ago?" the paper asked.

It was during those days that I met an old Englishman who with increasing disquiet had been following the course of Anglo-Soviet relations from his country home. He had been a frequent visitor to tsarist Russia but, unlike most Englishmen who had been familiar with pre-revolutionary Russia, he had continued to follow the course of Soviet Russia's development with an unprejudiced mind.

"I have seen," he said, "every means used to garble and falsify the truth about that country. If the Soviet achievement is something too obvious to be denied, then our press mocks it, and gives the public only a travesty

of the truth. Wherever the Soviet Union's strength emerges, there are people in this country who construe it as a danger, and whenever a sign of weakness is revealed to them, they idiotically interpret it as spelling the impending collapse of Soviet power.

"You, as a newspaperman, have a duty to your country. Go to Russia. Break down this wall of ignorance. Don't believe that it is a 'terra incognita,' a sealed book, a 'great enigma.' Those are mere phrases meant to beguile the people. You will find that this great land with its generous-hearted people and distinguished leaders lays the whole truth about itself before you, if you only will use eyes that are not afraid or filled with hatred.

"You have seen what has happened at Munich. That is the result of ignorance of the true strength of Russia. Do you think that a public that had even an inkling of the real strength and intentions of the Soviet Union would have cheered that evil man with the umbrella when he returned from the scene of that shameful capitulation?"

It was the revelation of the guiding principles of British foreign policy provided by the Munich capitulation, that caused me to make up my mind to return to Eastern Europe, nursing the hope that the day might come when I could act on the advice that had been given me to visit the Soviet Union.

British policy in preparation for the Munich

capitulation is now known to have been extremely active, although its apologists have tried to convince public opinion that the country was powerless to oppose Hitler's demands. In Berlin, the British Ambassador, Sir Nevile Henderson, directed his activities mainly to assisting Hitler to reach his ends in Czechoslovakia. It was no secret in London journalistic circles during the fateful summer of 1938 that he was strongly urging the argument on his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Halifax, that German hegemony east of the Rhine was a fact, and that "Central and Eastern Europe will in general have to dance as Hitler pipes."

"I was always convinced that Austria was bound to become part of Germany..." he wrote after the Anschluss in March 1938. "Austria is now eliminated.... But there remains the kindred problem of the Sudeten-deutschen and after that Danzig, a settlement with Poland and Memel." From my Czech friends in London I used to hear of the pressure the British Government was exercising on Czechoslovakia, urging it to go to the limit of concession in negotiating with the Sudeten German minority, although reliable information reaching London indicated that nothing short of complete assimilation into the Reich would satisfy the Hitler-directed Sudetens.

Within a month of the fall of Austria the

Czechoslovak Legation in London was aware that the British Minister in Prague, Basil Newton, was advancing arguments to his government in favour of Czechoslovakia's inclusion in the German orbit, which, of course, would have meant her renunciation of her alliances with the U.S.S.R. and France. Like his Berlin colleague, Henderson, Newton insisted that the British Government should use the firmest possible language at Prague, and on April 12, 1938, the Czechoslovak Minister in London was informed by Lord Halifax that it was essential that the Czechoslovak Government should face the realities of the situation and realize the necessities of making wide concessions to the German minority.

At the same time the British Minister of Foreign Affairs advised the Czechs not to take too seriously the significance of a declaration by the Prime Minister, Chamberlain, that Britain might become involved in war over Czechoslovakia. Thus, while intervening directly in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, demanding from it the utmost concessions to a Germany known to be planning the complete destruction of that state, the British Government showed no compunction in letting the Czechs know that they could not count on any guarantee of help from England. Such a guarantee would have given the Czechs the certainty that if Hitler were to go beyond the negotiated settlement, he would have to deal

with an England ready to come to Czechoslovakia's aid—if necessary, with arms.

With growing alarm Czech diplomats in London watched the successive stages in the betrayal of their land that was being prepared in the English capital. The press attaché, Jaroslav Kraus, who had many friends among London journalists, told them that his government knew for a fact that Konrad Henlein, the puppet leader of the Sudeten Germans, had been receiving money from the German government since 1935. The Sudeten Germans, treated by the British Government with great respect, received their instructions directly from the German Embassy in Prague. From the Czechs I also learned that Göring in his conversation with the King of Sweden at the end of April, had talked about the "need to drive the Czechs back to Russia, where they belong." Progressive Czech officials (of whom there were a few in those days) saw in Neville Henderson a deadly foe of their country and a sedulous propagandist of Hitler's racial theories.

It is now clear from official British documents that they were not mistaken in this opinion of the British ambassador in Berlin. On July 22, 1938, Henderson wrote to Sir Alexander Cadogan: "It is easy for Dr. Benes to attribute all ill faith and all difficulties to Germans and Sudetens, but I fancy that strict impartiality would distribute blame fairly equally."

The task for British diplomats was to force the maximum concessions from the Czechoslovak Government. In May, the leader of the Sudeten Germans, Hitler's puppet Henlein, visited London, where he was received with the respect accorded visiting statesmen. "We parted on as friendly terms as ever..." remarked Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, after his meeting with the Sudeten Nazi.

Tenaciously assisting Hitler in the execution of his plans in Eastern Europe, the British Government simultaneously withheld any promises of help to Czechoslovakia as it hustled the country along the path to destruction. On May 25, 1938, Lord Halifax told the Czechoslovak Minister in London that there could be no question of protecting Czechoslovakia against a German attack. Could Czechoslovakia, he asked, not adopt a "position of neutrality?" A "position of neutrality," of course, meant the abandonment of her treaty with the Soviet Union and the merging of Czechoslovakia in the German system. The Czechoslovak Minister in London, Mr. Jan Masaryk, reported this conversation to his government with a heavy heart. "Your country," he said to me at that time, "is shoving us into Hitler's very jaws."

The appeasement of Hitler was connived at by traitors in the Czechoslovak Government. Rejecting the advice of the Communists and Left-wing Social-Democrats, the govern-

ment of Milan Hodza, leader of the Right-wing agrarians, played into the hands of Chamberlain and Daladier. It ignored the only possible solution of their problems, honest sincere collaboration with the Soviet Union to the extent of calling on the Soviet Government to provide military forces with whose help Czechoslovakia could have defended herself against the aggressive demands of Hitler.

On June 26, at a meeting in Prague with the British Minister, Prime Minister Hodza suggested that it would be useful if, of course without mention of himself, the Czechoslovak Minister were summoned and informed of the impatience felt by His Majesty's Government at the absence of results and also of the grave consequences to be expected if the Czechs failed to go fast enough.

At the time one could only suspect the existence of such treason—it can be described by no other word—at the moment when questions of Czechoslovakia's very existence were under discussion. Now it has been established beyond doubt (though perhaps not intentionally) by the official documents of the British Government itself. With the help of the enemies of the Czechoslovak people, the British Government manoeuvred its course towards Munich, bewildering and demoralizing English public opinion by its shameless lack of political morality. Behind the scenes in the policy of appeasement were the machinations

of Anglo-American financiers anxious to reach agreement with Hitler, so that they might not only save, but further expand their substantial capital investments in German industry. These basic reasons of the Munich betrayal were long hidden from the masses.

Linked with the clique of German industrialists and banking magnates that had brought Hitler to power, American financiers, whose interests were closely tied up with those of the City, were dreaming of a "golden age" of co-operation between German and Anglo-Saxon imperialism. Without the least twinge of conscience they had poured money into the Ruhr. If Germany's internal problems, they argued, could be settled by her territorial expansion then let that expansion move eastward. And if Germany's "historic mission" involved Hitler with the Soviet Union—so much the better. A victorious Germany—and for the superiority of Germany's armed strength such "experts" as the American airman Charles Lindbergh had vouched—a victorious Germany would soon experience the need of capital in order to exploit the fertile soil of the Ukraine and the riches of the Caucasus. The English appeasers were able to carry out their programme in full confidence that it was approved by Wall Street.

Soon after the signature of the Munich agreement I went to Prague as a correspondent of "The Times" of London.

CHAPTER III

IN OCCUPIED PRAGUE

The Paris-Prague Express halted a long time at the new frontier post at Plzen before entering Czechoslovakia. The Czechs beside me sat white, tight-lipped, as the German officials examined their papers. When addressed in German they feigned ignorance and burst into rapid conversation in their own language. After the frontier and the Germans were left behind and the train ran through the hills and meadows, lit by the low-level beams of the winter afternoon sun, a Czech girl, a servant who was accompanying a little boy back from London, suddenly broke into song and danced down the corridor.

Rumours of German troop concentrations on the Bohemian frontier had brought back to the Czech capital many foreign journalists who a few months before had snapped their typewriter cases closed with the sense of relief that another "story" was over. But the flimsy fabric of Central Europe was rotting too quickly for

many of them to have gone far away. Now they were once again assembling in Prague's hotels, this time for "the kill."

I combined my job of correspondent of "The Times" with working in the Prague bureau of "The New York Times." The premises of this bureau were decorated with a huge golden-lettered sign, about which there is the following story. When the Sudeten crisis grew acute in 1938, the directors of the newspaper had made what they wished to be known as a gesture of sympathy for Czechoslovakia. Capacious offices were rented and fitted out with every kind of American office gadget. In their naive way they somehow expected the Prazaks to feel encouraged and grateful to the bosses of "The New York Times" for this mark of respect. After the German occupation of Prague, I was left in charge of this office, and one of my tasks was to supervise the removal of this huge sign and arrange for its despatch to the next centre of the newspaper's interest. It went to Warsaw where soon afterwards it was destroyed by a German bomb. The golden sign and eight telephones were the sum of my legacy. It was not long before the office's confidential courier, one Mueller, if I remember rightly, was exposed by the Czech resistance movement as a German spy.

After Hitler's cheap victory at Munich, all sorts of traitors revealed themselves by crawling out of the murky corners where they had

plotted and conspired. Now they were to flourish in the warmth of Nazi favour. But the events at Munich had other consequences, opening the eyes of the people of Czechoslovakia by showing them to what a catastrophic end the foreign policy of their government had led them. They had long yearned to know the truth about the Soviet Union; now it was clear to them. The attempt had been made to conceal from them the fact that Moscow had offered prompt and unconditional aid to Czechoslovakia in September 1938. But I found that throughout the betrayed land people knew the truth and were bitterly blaming their leaders for their lack of response to the Russians' offer.

I recall one of my Czech friend's words: "All this could have been avoided—the humiliation and the terror, the spoliation of my native land and the war which is now bound to come."

Munich was still fresh in my mind and I thought that he, like many Czechs who had taken part in the lightning mobilization of May 21, 1938, believed it would have been better to fight the Germans than to have followed the will-o'-the-wisp of appeasement which Chamberlain's agent, Lord Runciman, held before Czechoslovakia until it had led her to catastrophe. But he did not mean that.

"To think," he continued, "that if only Soviet Russia had been allowed to exercise her

rightful influence here, and in Eastern Europe as a whole, Hitler could have been contained and, in time, destroyed. Perhaps without war. Certainly without that." He pointed to a village school where, because it was Hitler's birthday, the Hakenkreuz was flying.

"I expect you will soon find," the foreign editor of "The Times," Ralph Deakin wrote to me, "that Prague will now sink to the status of a provincial German city."

Naturally it was not to the advantage of the British Government (in whose defence "The Times" always takes a most touching interest) that the British public should know too much about the price the Czechoslovak people were having to pay for Chamberlain's reputation as a "peacemaker."

Thus my activities as a foreign correspondent in occupied Prague were restricted. I was able to inform English and American readers with but few details of the sufferings of a people betrayed by the rulers of Britain and U.S.A. If during the days of the crucifixion of Czechoslovakia at Munich newspaper offices in Prague had buzzed with activity, now I was obliged to confine my reports to a few lines sent every two or three days. I had plenty of time to use my eyes and ears in the streets of Prague and in many provincial towns and villages. I convinced myself that the Czech people realized at once that they had been reduced to the status of colonial slaves.

Resistance, naturally, expressed itself in various forms. I saw a tall frail old lady, immaculately dressed in grey, raise her cane and slash the face of a heavily armed SS-man. A youth was shot dead in the sight of thousands as he tried to tear down a Nazi flag from a building in one of the main streets. Crowds sang the "Internationale" and the poignant Czech national anthem, "Where Is My Home," as they shook clenched fists at the occupants.

A series of mass demonstrations, brilliantly organized by clandestine workers, provided people with the opportunity to reject Hitler's assertion that Prague "was, is and will remain a German city." Ordered to celebrate Hitler's birthday, they filed in tens of thousands past the memorial to Jan Hus in Prague's Old Town Square, which had been erected as a protest against Austrian occupation. Each dropped a bunch of flowers which careful hands arranged to form the words "Truth Will Prevail," traditional motto of the Czech people. The Germans wiped it out, but the words appeared again. Then the crowds were dispersed. As they ran I saw a young Czech stoop in a narrow alley and chalk the immortal slogan on the pavement.

This was not yet the massive organized resistance movement that encompassed the nation later. As yet it was the manoeuvring of an army prior to the opening of battle. But the significance of these early anti-Nazi demon-

strations was great because in those days the people girded themselves for the real tests and battles that lay ahead. These first popular demonstrations revealed the strength of mass organization of which I had previously had no experience. The effectiveness of such mass activity is determined by the conscious behaviour of each individual participant. The effort of individuals, directed to a single aim, is a mighty unconquerable force.

Three months after the beginning of the occupation, the Germans, seizing on the most transparently flimsy pretext, imposed a reign of terror on the mining centre of Kladno.

Kladno is a group of mining villages and workers' settlements not far from Prague. The strong Communist vote returned in election after election had caused it to be known as "Red Kladno." Its mines are old and poorly-equipped compared to those of the Silesian region and the workers have fought a long hard struggle for tolerable conditions.

One June evening a Czech friend informed me that a German policeman had been found dead there and that martial law had been imposed on the district. I drove there immediately and for the next twenty-four hours saw a detailed picture of German administrative methods.

Wilhelm Kleist, the official German statement said, had been shot dead while on duty as a police sentry. As a reprisal martial law was instituted, and a heavy contribution levied on

the town. A searching investigation was started and pending its completion a curfew and other restrictions imposed. But one had only to spend a short time in Kladno to discover that these "routine precautions" were but the mask for a demonstration of naked force against the working class of Kladno. When I reached the town, sometime after midnight, the schools and other public buildings had been seized by the militarized police. A complete "black-out" had been ordered. Occasionally a shot rang out as German sentries, walking in pairs, fired blindly at any window from which a chink of light gleamed.

On the outskirts of Kladno, in a shed near an abandoned mine, I met the members of the local committee of resistance. I was handed a carefully documented statement on the Kleist "murder," containing sworn statements that left no shadow of doubt that the man, a notorious evil-liver, had been killed by a fellow-German in a café brawl, and his body had been "planted" to provide a pretext for reprisals.

The next day terror broke out. While armoured cars patrolled the country roads, heavy machine guns held the outskirts of the town within their sight, and squads of police went from cottage to cottage smashing furniture, making arrests and, whenever the mood seized them, breaking the miners' knuckles.

Sickened by this first experience of Nazi ter-

ror at work, I returned to Prague. Now it was clear to me that the Germans knew where their real enemies were to be found, knew that it was a waste of time to try to corrupt these people with the "liberal approach." They knew they would find no traitors in Kladno.

So it was that before the war began the Western Powers had full and unhindered opportunity, in the example of occupied Prague and "independent" Bratislava, to see for themselves with what methods the Nazis tried to force into servile submission a land with a proud, freedom-loving population.

It is true that as a result of non-recognition of the Hacha government their diplomatic representation was officially curtailed, but their consulates, emigration organization and passport offices continued to function.

The Kladno atrocities interested English official circles in Prague but little. When I began to tell my experiences to the English Consul, Pettitt, he abruptly changed the conversation.

The British Government was in fact fully informed about the situation in Czechoslovakia. Indeed, in spite of the deep concern aroused in England by the occupation of Prague, the government continued its secret negotiations with the Germans aimed at putting into effect its Munich "pledge" to establish a "golden era" of Anglo-German co-operation. The secret conversations with which Hitler entrusted his agent Wohltat, who conducted them with the

English representative Hudson, were intended to lead to a general settlement which would have given Hitler the possibility of executing his plans for crushing Poland and, with the approval of the Western Powers, "forcing Russia to her knees."

Although the Germans were far from tolerating any interference in their affairs in Czechoslovakia, they took pains not to exasperate the Foreign Office and in fact put no limitations on the more serious work of its representatives in Prague. Towards the envoys of the United States, the Germans exercised even less vigilance. The British Government itself, however, hastened to withdraw all observers who by remaining in Prague might have provided London with most valuable, if unwelcome, information about the methods of Nazi occupation. It is my opinion that this was part of a deliberate policy to keep the English people in ignorance about events in Prague and thus to smother the growing indignation at the consequences of Munich.

The flock of foreign correspondents who, to be in at "the kill," had gathered for the German arrival in Prague, melted in a week. As I had already said, my own appointment was of temporary nature being in no way intended to ensure a regular flow of news to London and New York. The Reuter Agency's office, where some of the most experienced London editors had worked the year before, was left in charge

of a Sudeten German called Rudl who soon declared himself to be a supporter of Hitler and a secret member of the Henlein movement.

In those days the British Intelligence Service was extremely active in its attempts to smuggle out of the "Protectorate" any material or technical personnel which could be useful to the British army. On the very eve of the German occupation of Prague the British Legation managed to remove by plane a group of Skoda engineers, and later British agents obtained details of an improved model of the Bren gun, smuggled out in parts through Budapest.

The rapidity with which the consular authorities acted when it was a question of extricating from Bohemia an engineer or a chemist was in marked contrast with their reluctance to provide help to German anti-fascist émigrés trapped in Prague—people who had been guaranteed this help under the terms of the Munich agreement.

A number of these "politicals," as they were classified at the British Consulate, had sought refuge in the apartment I had taken over from a Czech friend. Some had enough money or property to bribe Gestapo officials, some put no faith in British promises and escaped eastward through the Beskids. One, a German peasant Werner Neufliess, who had fled from the Gestapo when denounced as a member of the League of Human Rights, found his way blocked by the deliberate sabotage of the Brit-

ish passport-control office, with the result that his fate was arrest and execution.

In such ways the representatives of Britain carried on their line of betraying democracy and national independence.

But there were no lengths to which they would not go to protect British financial or business interests in the "Protectorate." This included direct collaboration with the Gestapo.

In Prague I saw officials, left there to represent England, who considered it an honour to receive Nazis and members of the Gestapo with their wives at tea on the consulate terrace.

A notable example of Anglo-German co-operation was revealed when one fine day the well-known English agent, Paul Dukes, arrived in Prague.

Dukes, who on his return from a secret mission to Russia in 1919 had been knighted and feted as a hero, was a rarity since it is generally the fashion to regard espionage as an unpleasant occupation beyond the ambit of diplomatic life. Dukes had avoided the usual fate of spies—he had neither been disavowed by his employers nor detected and exposed by his captors. However, he had changed his profession and switched from government service to the service of business firms and important financial concerns who entrusted him with various "delicate" missions. He had made no attempt to conceal from the small British colony in

Prague why he had come there. And once, at a well-attended lunch party on the terrace of a Prague restaurant, he told the story which was later to be published as a sensational book.

Dukes told his guests how a British insurance company had commissioned him to investigate the circumstances in which one of its Czech clients had disappeared. The disposition of an enormous sum of money—a life insurance policy amounting to several hundred thousands of pounds—depended on the results of his enquiries. Suavely and amusingly Dukes entertained his guests with the story of how he searched for the rich Czech merchant who had run off from occupied Prague with false papers, hoping to reach England, and how he had found that this man had been detained by German guards and killed. For weeks he had searched for the corpse until his mission had culminated in the exhumation of the body with the help of the murderers.

This agent of British finance capital had behind him the support of the British Embassy in Berlin and, he admitted, of Germans who knew him for his notorious anti-Soviet prejudices.

Dukes had met with such support from the British Embassy in Berlin that it would be naive to imagine that the mission of this notorious British agent was concerned solely with the interests of an insurance company, even though the sum of money involved was a large one.

Just at that time the German anti-fascist,

Karl Stock, was trying to get English help to get out of the "Protectorate." But he was soon to learn the difference in the value to the British ruling class of a decomposing but heavily insured corpse and an honest man, an anti-fascist fighting against Hitler. My feelings then would have been even stronger had I known that Karl Stock was to be burnt in the incinerators at Majdanek.

Another example of Anglo-German co-operation in Prague. The brothers Becher owned a tractor plant in Bohemia. They were Jews and fully aware of the danger of persecution by the Gestapo. But they had influential business friends in England who engaged a well-known English lawyer to offer the Nazi authorities a substantial sum in gold for their liberation. The deal was concluded within a fortnight of the outbreak of war, the gold being handed over to the Germans at the door of the aeroplane which bore the ransomed industrialists from the "Protectorate."

The attempt of British imperialism to establish itself in the Balkans and the countries of Eastern Europe is known to all; pursuing distant aims, English diplomatists used the German occupation of Prague systematically to select people who could be relied on to become the future supporters of their political designs in Eastern Europe. In the first place, they used for those aims the Right-wing leaders of the bourgeois parties and it was these politicians

who were collected in London where, soon afterwards, were gathered no small number of those "London governments" who had no contact with and no support among their peoples.

One night in August 1939, "The Times" correspondent in Berlin rang up to tell me to close the office in Prague and advised me to get out of the reach of the German army as soon as possible. In Slovakia I watched German tanks cross the Danube on their way to the Polish frontier. I was in Budapest when the Germans attacked Poland and already in Yugoslavia when, three days later, England declared war on Germany.

CHAPTER IV

SECRET DIPLOMACY IN
THE BALKANS

"The Golden Age" of open collaboration between German and Anglo-Saxon imperialism was over, at least for the time being. And now there began a bitter, prolonged struggle between British and German diplomacy, involving a veritable army of secret agents. The arena of this fierce contest between 1939 and 1941 was Belgrade.

The group of foreign correspondents working at that time in the Yugoslav capital were able to watch the fight from ringside seats.

Some of them, indeed, were not only spectators but became entangled in the course of the contest. In the capitals of Eastern Europe several foreign correspondents had made a practice of combining their journalistic work with other more lucrative business. A former Belgrade correspondent of "The Times," for instance, a certain Major Hanau, was the local represent-

ative of an English armaments firm, interested in the sale of munitions; and, in addition, he was considered by the Yugoslav authorities to represent the English Secret Service. One Gibson, the Bucharest correspondent of a leading British newspaper, was at the same time the agent for several important business firms. At the beginning of the war there appeared in Belgrade another British correspondent called Maitland, who was apparently also the confidential agent of Prince Paul, then Regent of Yugoslavia. Through his wife he was related to people who held influential positions at Paul's court.

Clad in the tail coat and silk hat he had somehow managed to rescue from bombed Warsaw during the evacuation, his skeleton-lean figure with its nervous twitching face was a familiar sight on the main streets of Belgrade as he set out every Saturday morning to visit the Royal Palace. In the end, his devotion to Prince Paul was the cause of his falling foul of the British authorities by trying to enlist the support of the English royal family for his beloved Paul, long after the latter had been unseated and British favour bestowed on his nephew Peter.

As for the Axis Powers, nobody had any doubt that their correspondents, such as DNB's Herr Gruber, and his Italian colleague of the Stefani agency worked in close connection with their countries' intelligence services.

Spies gathered in the Balkans like flies round a honeypot. English teachers and lecturers, French students of folklore, Baltic barons interested in photography, and Hitler's "tourists," who took a keen interest in everything, passed through Belgrade on various sorts of clandestine missions. There were few of my fellow journalists not invited in one way or another to fulfill some secret assignment. And journalists being what they are these propositions soon became common knowledge. One had the story that while out walking one day he was approached by an English diplomat called Julian Amery who wanted his help in running arms and money secretly into the mountainous region of a certain Balkan country. Another correspondent admitted to having been asked to accompany a barge loaded with explosives which was supposed to blow up in the Iron Gates so as to block the passage to German vessels.

One of these numerous attempts to enlist newspapermen for clandestine work had most unfortunate consequences for one colleague. One day an acquaintance in a legation asked him whether he would take care of a suit-case. The journalist agreed, but some time later he was called out of the capital on some business. For safety's sake, he left the suit-case at the British Legation, where there were people more interested than he had been to learn what was inside it. When he returned he was dismayed

to learn that he had to face the charge of having deposited explosives in His Britannic Majesty's Legation. Not long after this incident he was transferred to another place.

The recruiting zeal of England's secret diplomatic agents was not confined to journalists. It extended to the many Englishmen working in the Balkans as engineers, businessmen, technicians and directors of foreign-owned factories and mines.

From the various rumours circulating in the Belgrade cafés and night-clubs it was clear that this secret organization was supplying arms to people who were intended to be used as supporters of England in the Balkans, while at the same time denying them to those who might use them against the traitors of their own people. Even at the time of the fall of France and the retreat from Dunkirk the British Government hesitated to arm the working class and the rural proletariat.

As most of the agents of British Intelligence were young men of middle-class origin, such "caution" on the part of their government caused little or no concern.

Some idea of the nature of this policy of the British Government came my way during work as a correspondent. I remember, for instance, a conversation with the British Minister in Sofia, George Rendel, one of the clique of Roman Catholic diplomatists in the Foreign Office above all concerned with the problem of

preserving what was known as "order" in the Europe that would emerge from the war. Rendel was something of a rarity among British diplomatists in that he made a practice of talking at length to journalists. The reason was not far to seek. He had the reputation of being a Bulgarophil, and that was sufficient to place him in virtual isolation among his fellow diplomatists. According to rumours, too, he was waging a feud with the British Minister in Belgrade, Ronald Campbell, based on their disagreement about who was the more reliable for the British Government, Prince Paul of Yugoslavia or King Boris of Bulgaria. To journalists visiting Sofia the British Minister, with unusual frankness, would explain that in the stability of a Bulgaria led by King Boris he saw a guarantee of future order in the Balkans. He did not conceal his fears that if the Soviet Union became involved in the war and Hitler be defeated, a severe strain would be placed on the monarchical system throughout the Balkans, where, admittedly, Russia was very popular among the masses. As long as the dynasties remained—and the Coburg dynasty of Bulgaria was, he argued, the most soundly established—then Soviet influences would be held in check. It was, therefore, in Britain's interests that full support be given to the preservation of the monarchies in the Balkans, and especially in Bulgaria. He had, he told the press in confidence, received from King

Boris the most categorical assurances that Bulgaria would never enter the German camp. Of course, nothing was said about it not being King Boris, but the Bulgarian people who were against collaboration with Hitler.

Rendel in fact proposed that England should make plans for either eventuality—for the defeat of the U.S.S.R., and for the Soviet victory over Hitler, if a German attack on the Soviet Union could be managed.

He knew the Balkans well enough to realize that in the event of Soviet victory, British influence in the Balkans would be most dangerously threatened, and he, therefore, urged full British support for King Boris since it was just around him and his successors that the "patriots" of Bulgaria would group to form the "kernel" of that order which was so desirable for Britain in the postwar Balkans.

The minister succeeded in convincing one of my colleagues that it was his duty to defend the monarchical principle in the Balkans in the press. This journalist set out to write a thesis which, he hoped, would be laid on the desk of every delegate at the Peace Conference. He is, probably, still working on it.

The hopes which British diplomatists placed in monarchical regimes in the Balkans did not, however, prevent the British Government from establishing contact with the Right-wing leaders of peasant parties and Catholic circles,

whom they were to use later as their agents in East-European countries.

Though British policy in the Balkans often seemed obscure, it may be said with confidence that the clandestine work going on there was only partly directed against the expected German invasion.

The British diplomats' main concern was to resist by all means the granting of any sort of aid to real progressive, anti-fascist elements, struggling for the independence of their nation against foreign oppressors.

The wild extravagance and indiscretions of the instigators of English secret diplomacy in the Balkans, installed in all those press departments, vice-consulates, branches of the British Council and other agencies connected with British legations, was an open secret to us journalists. Ronald Campbell, then the British Minister, was strongly rumoured to have threatened to resign in protest when he discovered that highly explosive mines were being kept in the room of one of his attachés. His indignation was probably all the stronger since the room lay immediately below his own. Well known, too, were the stories of diplomatic couriers arriving in provincial cities with diplomatic bags stuffed with arms in place of letters.

The rows culminated in the explosion of a suit-case brought from Sofia to Istanbul. While the incident was officially attributed to enemy

action, it was commonly believed in press circles that the infernal machine had been in the luggage of a British agent.

Often English and German agents found themselves working alongside each other.

The experience of one of my colleagues, a journalist drawn into British clandestine work, may be considered as typical.

He was instructed to establish himself as a pro-consul in the British Vice-Consulate at Skoplje, the chief city of Yugoslav Macedonia. He was instructed to study the general political situation for the Foreign Office, and to help the military attaché by keeping an eye open for troop identifications, the state of strategically important roads and bridges, etc., etc. All in all, an interesting assignment for an ex-journalist with the humble rank of pro-consul, whose official powers did not even include the right to conduct the marriage ceremony!

His arrival brought the staff of the Vice-Consulate up to three officials. The British population of the entire province, whose interests it was supposed to be protecting, consisted of one person, a well-to-do naturalized Englishman who owned chrome-mine concessions and was probably quite capable of looking after his own interests without consular aid.

The Germans reacted immediately to this increase in the number of British agents in Macedonia (which, incidentally, never received the official sanction of the Yugoslav authorities)

by, in their turn, sending an experienced diplomatist there. He arrived in Skoplje on the same day as my friend the pro-consul. Sometimes they were the only two passengers in the plane that flew weekly to Belgrade. These two opponents lived a Box and Cox existence in the city. The Englishman had not been long in Skoplje when he discovered that his German and Italian opponents were working at cross-purposes.

One day in an abandoned Moslem graveyard outside the town, the pro-consul met one of his agents who brought him a report that had been carried out of Albania by a merchant engaged in smuggling maize. The report contained details of road and bridge construction in Central Albania and a collection of Italian propaganda leaflets. Among these was a map that was being distributed surreptitiously among the Albanian population by Italian agents. This map showed the frontiers of the future Albania which was to be created under Italian aegis after victory. These frontiers clashed with those that the Germans were promising the Bulgarians. Within a few days arrangements had been made to have this map published on the front page of an American newspaper. The exposure of the contradictions in the propaganda of the Axis partners caused considerable confusion in Berlin and Rome. The Italians made a swift demarche in Belgrade about the activities of British agents in Macedonia. The

Yugoslav Foreign Minister in person visited Skoplje to conduct an enquiry and on the next day the "pro-consul" was invited to police headquarters where, as he told me later, he was warned that unless he left the country in twenty-four hours his physical safety could not be guaranteed, as it was delicately put.

British, like German, secret diplomacy in the Balkans had its long-range plans. The Germans worked methodically, boring from within at the whole structure of the Yugoslav state so that it was to collapse like a house of cards at the first attack. British secret diplomacy, envisaging the possibility of war between Germany and the Soviet Union and a Soviet victory in that war, occupied itself mainly with collecting agents among potential renegades who in wartime had the label of "anti-fascist" and "national heroes."

Those of us who remained outside the orbit of clandestine diplomacy assumed that its chief was a small stooping man whose large round face, usually wearing a sickly-sweet smile, was familiar to all waiters in Belgrade's cafés. He was celebrated for his collection of ikons, bought over a period of many years in Russian émigré circles, and for his reckless gambling at the racecourse. He spoke of his assistants as "my boys" and his attitude towards them was quite fatherly. For a long time, he let them understand, he had played an important behind-stage part in the turbulent history of the

Yugoslav state, and at intimate dinner-parties in his villa liked to relate anecdotes of the corruption, brutality and terror of the various dictators he had seen succeed each other in Belgrade. To his table, where the candlelight caused precious Russian silver to glow, came conspirators and agents from English firms, mines and insurance companies all over Yugoslavia. Patiently and methodically he had woven a network of informants stretching from the Austrian frontier to the borders of Bulgaria.

Since the outbreak of war, however, his authority had been challenged by a group of younger men, who, thirsty for violent action, considered his methods too leisurely.

One of the rivals of his post was the Englishman Lisle, known to all as "The Slug," a heavily built, bulgingly fat man on whose unhealthily pale face a curiously bright red moustache flourished luxuriously. "The Slug" prided himself on his eccentricities. A cautious man himself, he was a fan of Spanish bullfighting and had abruptly changed his allegiance to the Spanish Republicans when they placed a ban on his favourite sport. His knowledge of the by-ways of English 18th century literature was profound and he used to hold forth with wit and genuine appreciation on the elegancies of aristocratic life of those times, pointing scornfully with his amber-topped cane to the idle pleasure-loving Belgrade burghers who sat at little tables in the "Russki Tsar" café. But this

superficial refinement was merely the veneer over a gross nature.

Another aspirant was Hackett, in many ways the strangest character of all that company. Hackett was not so much a conspirator as an actor able to transform himself and give perfect performances of many quite different roles. Rather less than the normal height, with a feeble ill-proportioned figure, his face wore the expression of tense concentration of a man playing a role and constantly alert for bursts of applause. Such was Hackett. The caution and secrecy that his profession exacted from him he found distasteful, wishing to be recognized as a man steeped in intrigue, deceit and military cunning. He had the actor's nature, a mimic who wanted to act all the parts of his own puppets, and he derived an enormous satisfaction from observing himself playing roles in this or that complicated farce.

To many of us Englishmen, living in Belgrade at that time, it was obvious enough that the English secret service was essentially interested in finding reliable political allies who could be counted on to hold a bridgehead in case of a British landing on the shores of the Balkan Peninsula, and but little interested in damaging railway wagons taking chromium ore to Germany or in sticking plastic bombs to the holds of ships loading bauxite at Dubrovnik. The Yugoslavs were fully aware of the true nature of the activities of all this army of differ-

ent attachés, press-reading experts and their assistants, English teachers, local consuls and representatives of the British Council. The British were only able to behave with this unparadonable tactlessness because Yugoslavia was ruled by a clique of corrupted people who had betrayed the country's independence. For every concession allowed the English the Germans, one may be sure, received no less. The Secret Police of Yugoslavia and its other organs of repression, as was known in journalistic circles, were very well aware of what was going on and could not have been ignorant of the existence of the secret British organization working under their noses. But the regime was already rotten, corruption and intrigue reigned in the country which was already sliding to disaster. Yugoslavia had become a playground for foreign spies and agents. Such is the fate reserved for any land however ancient its traditions of independence if it is led by traitors who look with something more than benevolence on foreign intervention.

After my stay in occupied Prague, and after Belgrade, the next few months gave me an opportunity to think over the main problem: what was this war being fought for?

Transferred from Belgrade to Istanbul, I drove there through Bulgaria and Thrace. For a time I stayed in a villa close to the swift-flowing Bosphorus. Every fortnight, early in the morning the Soviet steamer "Svanetia" glided

past the ancient Turkish forts and, as strains of Russian choruses came across the water from its loud speakers, the fishermen toiling at their nets on the shores of Bebek raised their heads and watched the gleaming white vessel glide past till it turned the headland into the Black Sea. One day I tried to reach this headland but Turkish sentries turned me back, and an officer explained that it was forbidden to look on the sea beyond which lay the Soviet Union.

I travelled by the express across Turkey to Aleppo in Syria where Indo-Chinese troops under French command, armed with sub-machine guns, were on guard over the sullen crowds in the bazaars. I drove along the highways of North Palestine past grim new fortresses built for the British constabulary, and from a port on the Red Sea I began the long sea voyage that was to take me around the Cape of Good Hope, up the coast of West Africa, far out into the Atlantic, and finally to Britain.

Looking back at my experience in the Balkans I could see the war which the nations were waging against Germany only as a struggle for survival. Germany must not win—that was quite clear to me, but surely this war must not end only in the defeat of Hitlerism, without the complete destruction of fascism. The people of all lands had the right to get what they had been promised in the heavy days of war.

Unless the war had such a conclusion

there would not, there could not be a final victory over fascism. No one could consider himself to be free to enjoy his rights unless freedom was given to all, including those whom Britain's colonial rulers denied the right to count themselves human beings.

I was in England when the news came that Germany had attacked the Soviet Union. I was asked to go to Moscow to represent "The Times." On a grey autumn morning I set sail from England into the hazardous future with the hope of finding a country where at last the fascists, the enemies of all working people, had met their match.

CHAPTER V

JOURNEY TO THE SOVIET UNION

The faint outline of the port installations of Glasgow were at last swallowed up in the Atlantic mists. An impressive silence brooded over the whole congregation of vessels. Slowly we took up our position just inside the boom, and at dawn we turned the point. Two days later we steamed into Scapa Flow, our last port of call before the Soviet Union. A strong west wind fretted the sea. Bursts of sunshine, following heavy squalls, flooded the vast harbour with a limpid light. The islands among which we lay were treeless but clothed in a brilliant green turf. The lines of the hills flowed gently down to the sea. There was a wonderful simplicity about this great pool of safety where so many great ships lay.

From there the convoy set sail for Archangel. For the next two weeks our lives were dominated by the ordered rhythm of ship life in wartime. We rode heavy swells that caused the

ship to roll sharply, and then the northern waters swirled more sluggishly and we met fog. Ice formed on the decks and the halyards thickened with frost. We came close enough to Jan Mayen Island to hear the cries of its puffins and kittiwakes like the distant sound of a cascade. Bear Island was a hump of snow-streaked mountain. Sailing towards Spitzbergen to avoid the German blockade we ran into a full gale which caused the ship to stagger and shudder. Alerts were followed by periods of unease. But at even speed, the pace of the slowest vessel, the convoy moved as if urged on by an irresistible force towards its rendezvous with the Red Fleet off the barren granite Murman coast.

On the fourteenth day we reached the most northerly point on our course. That evening the snowstorm abated and many stars were visible. The ship gleamed in its white mantle. Across the whole of the heavenly dome a green powdery light lay as if painted with the softest brush, palpitating as gently as the fading and reviving of ash in the fire. Against this softness there would suddenly appear blunt crystal-like shapes in groups of three or four, scattered haphazardly about the sky.

This splendid pageant of the Northern Lights, appearing at the time we were about to alter course and head southward on the last lap to Russia, raised the spirits of the ship's company remarkably. We were one of the earliest of the Arctic convoys and everybody felt that this

was no ordinary voyage. To the taciturn sailors on watch the gales we met, the hard frosts that made the tarpaulin covers of the guns as stiff as metal, the mines that bobbed through the channels between the convoy lines, all the obstacles to our progress were part of the barrier that separated Britain from Russia.

Arab stokers, withdrawn from the rest of the crew, speaking no English, spread their prayer mats on the ice-covered decks to pray towards the Arctic sunset. Curry—the chief engineer, son of a miner who had worked in the same coalpit from the age of 9 to 65, Weaver, the third mate, a lean dark-complexioned youth who lived in a private world peopled by jazz-band leaders and blonde crooners, a wireless man known to all as “Sparks” who after much hesitation told me he read Marxist literature “on the quiet,” a pale-faced sickly-looking steward Jack who when I first asked his name had replied: “Why, sir, have I done anything detrimental?” thinking I needed it to report him to the officers, the stolid carpenter who welcomed visitors to his workshop on the top deck, all this heterogeneous collection of sailors who came together only for the daily lifeboat drill had gradually revealed to me their excitement at the prospect of successfully bringing arms to the Soviet Union.

The trucks we carried bore friendly messages of greeting to the Soviet people from riveters and dockers. Our sailors, too, felt proud to be

opening up this perilous route to an ally, and many times during the voyage I was drawn aside by members of the crew and quietly told how much they envied my luck to be going to a land where "they were really teaching those German bastards a lesson."

What I heard from English sailors between Glasgow and Archangel was a reflection of the mood of all England. While before June 22, 1941, there were undoubtedly many who at the back of their minds held a German victory as possible, after Hitler's onslaught on the Soviet Union, I believe there were very few who doubted that however long the war might last and however heavy the cost, victory was now assured for the Allies. Except for the "experts" who were predicting Hitler's seizure of Moscow in six weeks, the nation was united in its belief that the U.S.S.R. was unconquerable. Indeed, this almost fatalistic belief became quite dangerous at times, lulling people into complacency. Those who were later to strain every effort to delay the opening of the second front made cunning use of the general conviction that Russia could never be beaten.

In those days the British Government discovered that England had never had an ally more popular with the working class than the Soviet Union. Productivity rose in the factories and the spirit of the English soldiers rose in response to the example of the Red Army and the heroic civilian population in the rear.

To many an Englishman the war had, overnight, on June 22, 1941, become far away. British cities were not being blitzed. The évacués were returning, and during that summer London, packed with British and Empire troops, enjoyed itself almost lightheartedly after the tenseness of the previous winter. And people knew that this was because Russia was taking the main blow.

My American colleagues on the "Temple Arch" used to while away the long hours of the Arctic evening with nostalgic stories of the good times they had in the London hotels during that slack summer.

But among ordinary English people as among these sailors with whom I was now sailing to the Soviet Union the feeling of admiration for the bravery of this country continued to grow, strengthening their will to victory. These men who knew next to nothing about the Soviet Union were absolutely convinced that the Russians were fighting for their interest, which was far from what they thought the English Government was doing.

In the galley a sailor called Peel told me a long story of the way he was brought up in Newcastle. He was a lively little man with a merry laugh, but his voice rang with resentment and indignation when he spoke of the eight years before the war—years of the shipping slump when hundreds of ships were being broken up. He told of unemployed seamen idle

on shore, treated worse than beggars, of shipyards closing down and only reopening when the war began and orders came for warships.

"And now," Peel said, "we are being told, we are the most important people in the war. They keep us rotting in peacetime and then when war comes they come to us with their: 'please be heroes.' They sit in their offices on land and for them our ships are just little red flags on pins stuck in a map. When they hear we've had one they pull them out and throw them into the wastepaper basket and say: 'Bad luck, sir.'"

Peel was not the only one by far who nursed resentment behind a meticulous respect for the ship's discipline. I was on watch with one of the crew, a giant of a man with a gentle firm manner, whose views on the war would certainly not have gone down well with our stern Scottish captain. Cummings was another sailor for whom the fact that I was going to the U.S.S.R. broke down the usual class barriers. He and his mates treated me as if I were a sort of envoy through whom they could send a greeting to the Russian workers. He was noticeably older than the others and it turned out that he had volunteered for the Arctic run for political reasons. Not that he was a Communist. In peacetime he had been a driver working for a Liverpool shipping firm. He taught me how to sight a gun, aiming it at an imaginary aeroplane and then said, as

calmly as if he was discussing the weather: "You're a lucky man to be going to a country where the workers are the rulers. Tell them that the British workers are heart and soul with Russia. When we win we'll do great things together. We won't be using steel to make things like this gun, we'll be building schools, and bridges, and homes in Newcastle." Then an officer came up and we parted. The class distinction between the fo'c'sle and the bridge was sharp.

Our captain was in many respects an admirable man; observant, educated, devoted to duty, maintaining discipline not by sharp words but by the example of his own keenness. His ship kept strictly in the wake of the leading vessel, he made no noticeable navigational mistakes. Quiet spoken, a native of the Isle of Skye, he derived a keen and infectious pleasure from the performance of the arduous duties of sailing in convoy. But for him it made little difference whether we were delivering arms to Russia or shipping oranges from Spain. What to the crew was a chance of striking a blow at the enemy in a fight truly their own was to him but the fulfillment of duty.

A few hours after the spectacular display of Northern Lights had faded, we altered course and from then on sailed southward towards the Soviet land.

On arising the next morning we had our

first view of the Soviet Union, cliffs gashed with ravines, white with driven snow and falling steeply into the sea. Beyond stretched an undulating and apparently barren hinterland. What did that uninviting coast hold in store for me? An end to indecision and aimless wandering? Was it here that I would find faith in something that transcended mean and pitiful individualism? I had no false worship of Soviet Russia when I landed there. I wanted to look at it squarely. It had been held up to me by some as the country that carried in its body the hopes of all progressive mankind, by others as the apotheosis of evil. I wanted to see it as it really was.

* * *

The Russia I crossed during the next three weeks was in the throes of an orderly evacuation unsurpassed in the scale and in degree of organization in the history of mankind. The entire grandiose planned transfer of industry and people was an operation like a great spring being coiled more tightly so that its power be increased for the moment when its release could strike the heaviest blow at the enemy.

By the end of my journey to the Urals and trans-Volga Russia I knew that Soviet Russia possessed the power, the organization and the leadership to win the war, single-handed if need be, against Hitler Germany.

The self-reliance of the people, their moral strength and unshakeable patriotism, their spirit of comradeship that gave to each individual the strength of two or three, these things were made manifest during the evacuation.

The confidence of the organizers of the evacuation in the loyalty and ability of local organs to implement their broad plan in detail, the way the entire grandiose operation rested on tens of thousands of local actions carried out with scrupulous attention to the priorities list, this provided unshakeable proof of the strength and organizing ability of Soviet society.

In the West, evacuation had come to mean the shifting of non-combatants to safety, or the retreat of people with tender nerves to places of comfort. In the Soviet Union evacuation was a strategic manoeuvre, a shifting of forces preliminary to a counter-offensive. Looking back on the experiences of that slow, jolting journey from Archangel to Yaroslavl, from Yaroslavl to Sverdlovsk and Chelyabinsk, and then to Kuibyshev, a journey so rich in opportunities to observe the behaviour of the millions then on the move, I felt that I was then witnessing a victory as decisive as those I attended later on the war fronts. We moved from sector to sector along the vast home front.

We could not have been received more

kindly, or cared for more attentively than we were during those days of stress and anxiety in November 1941. When we visited Archangel the gazes that met us were curious but kind. The cheerfulness and radiant health of the children, playing on skis, made a deep impression on me.

Yet there was no lack of voices to warn me against drawing too optimistic a conclusion from first impressions. One, Fisher, a former sound-track expert who was said to know Russia well and who was working as an interpreter to the British representative at Archangel, insisted that the morale of Moscow was low and that the city would starve. Other know-alls showed that they had little faith in the Soviet regime's ability to organize resistance.

For the next two or three weeks I had the opportunity of putting some of these views to the test.

Our train drew into Yaroslavl a few hours after the station had been attacked by 14 German aircraft. Their bombs had caused casualties but without interrupting the flow of reinforcements to the Moscow front. It was the night of November 6-7 when J. V. Stalin and other Soviet leaders were attending the traditional meeting in Moscow.

Early next morning, as light gritty snow swirled through the gaps in the station's damaged roof, the loud speakers brought an

account of the historic parade in the Red Square where the dauntless defenders of Moscow saluted their indomitable leader. At that time several trainloads of Siberian soldiers stood in the marshalling yards while the station was crowded with refugees from Moscow, Leningrad and West Russia. As I watched them listening attentively to the voice of Stalin I saw something I had never seen before—a wave of hope and joy spreading across the raised alert faces like a burst of sunshine sweeping over a field of swaying corn.

I understood then how Stalin's firm confident challenging words had lightened people's hearts and helped them to face the unknown into which millions were travelling.

The middle-aged nurse who spoke to us from the door of a brand-new hospital train travelling westward, the Latvian family who had left a blazing village in the night, the pretty fair-haired woman whose husband and infant had been killed, the women of Perm (Molotov) who lingered at the station after seeing their sons off to the war, and tenderly clutched refugee children to their breasts, the superbly equipped soldiers, whose defiant songs reached our ears through the doors of teplushkas, the groups of workers for whom it was as natural to spread grease over an evacuated lathe or to readjust a loose tarpaulin as it is for a mother to go to the aid of a suffering child, the thousands of travellers

who to us were but faces revealed for a second through the swirling steam in the marshalling yards of Chelyabinsk, or glimpsed dimly through windows of the trains waiting their turn to proceed—they all felt themselves to be part of an army whose cause must prevail because it was just.

These people trusted their government completely. There was no other way to explain the fact that they endured the hazards of this journey into the unknown in such good spirit, that their relations with the officials in whose hands their fate lay were so free from suspicion.

The second lesson for me was learned from their behaviour to each other. These people, I realized, were deprived of all they possessed, were travelling to unknown destinations, their only wealth their skill and qualifications. Now was the time of test which would determine whether their socialist society had in fact fashioned a new man whose relations with his neighbour are not governed by the desire to deceive, to gain personal advantage. I watched one group of workers descend at a small town where their factory was to be rebuilt, a little place in a thin forest of birch. Before they trudged off they took the bread they had left and gave it to the passengers in the next coach, Latvians on their way to Tashkent.

When the train halted between stations—which happened very often—all descended and

searched the forest for firewood. Soon dozens of little fires were blazing on the snow. The children played while their parents cooked food. There were no few whose supplies were long exhausted, but no one went without, Jew or Russian, simple workman or senior official. To deny a hungry man a share of their own rapidly diminishing food would have seemed to these Soviet people as unnatural as to forbid someone to join in a chorus.

Finally, I learned the Soviet skill in organizing the work of the masses. The entire evacuation, it seemed, was conducted according to a very few clear simple directives, establishing priorities and objectives. Tremendous confidence was placed in local officials' loyalty and ability. I saw transport workers, military commandants, medical workers and others grappling with the appalling problems that faced them with the arrival of every new trainload. They did not run off to ask somebody's advice or permission, or search their desks for written instructions. They appeared to have complete confidence that their superiors would back them in any action they thought fit to take. Terse, self-reliant, incisive they issued their instructions after listening with astonishing patience to the requests brought to them.

I sat once in the office of a woman station-master. A foreman came in to say he had forty workers with him who were not to be separated from their machine tools. Could arrangements

be made for the flatcars to be hooked on to the next passenger train to Sverdlovsk? A school-teacher from Leningrad wanted to know where a hundred children could wait for their train. And so on, without interruption, at every station throughout this period of evacuation.

It is not so much the devotion to duty that impressed me, as the type of official which the Soviet regime had fashioned, their steadiness, their mastery of jobs, and a combination of humility when they listen to inquiries—as true servants of the public—with the authoritative manner of people who know that their posts call them to command. I had never seen anything like this before.

We crossed the Kama after a week's traveling from Yaroslavl, with less frequent halts we passed Kungur into country where the trees grew taller and the big sprawling villages were rarer. At most stations there were piles of skis and sledges to be taken to the front. The posters announced that those who went to the front would fight till victory.

For a few days we saw something of the great Urals workshop that sustained the Soviet war effort. Chelyabinsk left an impression of solidly built houses of good architectural proportion and of sidings containing hundreds of locomotives. I remember its hill slopes dotted with recruits learning to ski, Zlatoust's factories working day and night, their lights reflected in the lake below the mountains. We

crossed Bashkiria with its forests of oil derricks. Many times later when I saw new arms streaming to the front I recalled this glimpse of the gigantic strength that was feeding the Red Army with the means of fighting, and remembered those steadfast confident people with whom I had shared a part of their journey to the factories of the Urals, the fields of Siberia and Kazakhstan.

The long journey with its innumerable meetings provided me with much food for thought. I was asked many questions about England. The Russian people at that time had high hopes in their allies and did not doubt for a moment that as great an effort would be made in the West to beat Nazi Germany as was being made in Russia. Of course they did not indulge themselves in the comforting thought that English diplomats and big businessmen had suddenly on one June night in 1941 become the devoted allies of Soviet Russia, or that they had stopped working against the interests of their own people. But the Russians hoped that the British Government would keep its word, because Soviet Russia had saved England from a German invasion.

CHAPTER VI

WHILE RUSSIA FOUGHT

For the next four years my task was to provide the British and American public with a day-to-day account of the war on the Eastern front. People in the West eagerly devoured every item of news about the titanic struggle between the Red Army and the forces of Hitler.

In a series of visits to the front I watched the tremendous drama of the war gradually unfold. On the defence lines of Moscow, at Kalinin, Stalingrad, Rzhev, Korsun-Shevchenkowsky, Sevastopol, Kiev, Leningrad, Odessa, Tallinn, Minsk, on the banks of the Vistula, finally in Berlin. . . .

With guns muttering in the West and searchlights probing the sky, I came to Mozhaisk soon after General Govorov's armies had forced von Bock's armour back. On the field of Borodino, near a monument of 1812, where in October 1941 General Polosukhin's 32nd rifle division

held the advance of 300 German tanks, remains of the cottage of Martha Kulakova still smouldered and her three children and 63-year-old mother were crouched around the warm ashes. Groups of women and children stood with ropes beside the highway to help army transport through the driven snow. But in Mozhaisk the municipal officials, who together with the townsfolk had been fighting as partisans, had already taken over administration from the army.

Kalinin too had not long been freed when I visited it.

"We knew we would come back and moved only a few miles from the occupied city," the woman mayor of the town, a former worker, told me. "We planned for liberation even as we left the city."

In a snow-filled ravine near Vyazma I watched scores of girls recovering sewing machines they had buried before the Germans arrived. They were working ceaselessly in a factory under shellfire stitching clothes for the Red Army.

I never returned from these trips to the war areas during the early days of the conflict without marvelling at the strength that lay in the rank-and-file members of Soviet society. The world, appalled by the scale of the catastrophe that had occurred on Russian soil, was pouring out its admiration for the constancy of the Russian people in their days of anguish and

suffering. The impression that an eyewitness of these events obtained was, however, not so much one of the people's suffering as of the way how, when challenged, the Soviet masses fought back with unmatched tenacity.

I travelled far in my study of the Russian fighting man's spirit, from the Arctic coast, where the white-robed watchers waited on the alert for German vessels, to the contested heights of the Crimea. I saw young volunteers drilling on Moscow's snow-clad outskirts, saw the youngster, who had become a veteran, exchanging memories of the battle for Moscow with his comrades, the wounded in the hospitals impatient to return to the front.

From all that I saw I understood that the Soviet fighting man was essentially an ordinary Soviet citizen. No army caste had been formed in that land. The impress of Soviet education was the same on every citizen.

The Red Army man fought in the knowledge that his leaders believed economy in the use of man power to be fundamental to Soviet strategy. The Russian soldier was heartened by the conviction that his value was fully appreciated by his leaders.

One other thing I noticed especially, since it showed so great a difference between the Soviet Union and Britain; the Red Army man at the front felt no anxiety about the welfare of his family. In Cairo I had been told by responsible officers that a high proportion of the

letters written home by soldiers on the North-African front expressed such anxieties and that any interruption in the flow of mail had a serious effect on morale. As far as I could discover the Soviet front-line soldier took it for granted that in his Socialist Land the state took full responsibility for the welfare of his family. Although the vast evacuation had carried millions away from their homes, the Red Army appeared to have complete confidence in the authorities in the rear.

Gradually I came to see the Red Army man as one stern and terrible when he attacked the enemy, a man who liked to read the poems of Pushkin and Mayakovsky, who respected his commanding officer according to his merits as a fighter; who dreamed of peace and when occasion allowed studied for postwar life even when on the battlefield; who had confidence in himself and, once he had learned his enemy's methods set his mind to the problem of mastering him as he might have done when faced with a new machine, or a patch of difficult unworked ground to plough. Above all, I had discovered him to be a Soviet citizen, defending the Soviet way of life, believing passionately, stubbornly, utterly in Soviet values.

It was just in those days when the Soviet fighting men were performing miracles of bravery, devotion, moral purity and fighting craft, in those days when the Soviet Union was exerting all its strength, concentrating all its

thoughts on one thing only—the struggle with Hitler Germany, in those days when it strove in the name of freedom and happiness of all mankind, it was just at that time that in the West military and diplomatic circles were already weaving a network of conspiracies against its heroic and self-sacrificing people.

In 1943 I spent several months in London. I met leaders of military and political affairs who held within their hands the possibility to open the second front and join with the Russians in destroying the enemy. But those leaders were by no means absorbed in considering the urgency of the second front. In those days the generals were discussing campaigning in the Balkans, and the politicians were contemplating the “problems” that would arise when the Red Army entered Central Europe. For the British public the personality of General Alexander was being built up as a man who, with the handful of pebbles picked up at the time of the evacuation of the British army from Europe in 1940, had sworn to return to the continent. But those pebbles taken from the Atlantic shore were to be scattered on a beach of the Mediterranean.

Ministers, prominent officials in the War Office, High Commissioners of the Dominions, retired generals transformed into military correspondents, scrambled to see someone who had just come from Moscow. The Minister of Information in those days, Brendan Bracken,

wanted to find out from me how the British propagandist services in the U.S.S.R. were getting on. He made it pretty plain in the conversation we held that he had already lost faith in the durability of Anglo-Soviet relations envisaged in the Treaty of Friendship. He asked: “What do you think, will the Russians look on our invasion of Europe across the Mediterranean as equivalent to the opening of a second front?”

And the burly, suave Minister of Production, Oliver Lyttelton, a typical “captain of industry,” sought my opinion on how Moscow would react to a liberation of the Balkans by British forces. I was to remember his question much later when I learned that Oliver Lyttelton had been one of the first to support Churchill’s policy of intervention in Greece after British diplomacy had done everything it could to prevent the Greek people from choosing a popular democratic government.

A group of businessmen, interested to restore commercial relations with the U.S.S.R. after the war, invited me to spend an evening with them and asked me what were the chances of the Soviet Government abandoning its monopoly of foreign trade.

Officials of the Ministry of Information begged me for “any kind of material” which would indicate that the Soviet Union “had already departed from Communism.” One of the “veterans” of the “Russian” section of this

ministry boasted to me cynically when we met that he owed his appointment to a report he had written for Winston Churchill on the theme of Soviet Russia as a continuation of tsarist Russia. "The only way to 'sell' Russia to the old man is to dish it up that way," he said. "It's just the kind of nonsense he wants to believe."

I got the impression that nearly all my friends in London were working in some sort of information offices instead of fighting the enemy at the front. I met some of them later in Cairo where one of them told me he had been promised a job with the future British military governor of—Rumania.

It was in those days of 1943, when after the defeat of the German offensive in the Kursk-Belgorod bulge it became clear that the Red Army's victory over the Germans was certain, that the atmosphere in London military and political circles changed to irritable complaints that the Russians were "ungrateful," that they were not, apparently, accepting the idea of American "leadership" in the conduct of the war. In his conferences with Roosevelt, Churchill bluntly advanced his reactionary political views urging that the opening of a second front in Western Europe should be delayed.

Along the coasts of Britain the "commandos" gathered, bravest of the brave in the British army. But they left Britain's coasts not to lead the invasion of France, but to land on the

shores of Africa and Italy as a preliminary to Albania and Yugoslavia. They were sent to Cairo so that they could later be thrown into Greece, where the forces of the ELAS were themselves more than a match for the occupiers. British parachutists were dropped into occupied France, but the Frenchmen they worked with there were instructed to withhold arms from the Communists, who were in the van of the resistance movement.

The British people worked with all their strength to destroy the personification of reaction—Hitlerite Germany, but the workers were singing a popular song about their politicians: "We are the long time dodgers."

One day a group of officers visited the factory where young fair-haired Maud Green worked. They congratulated her on her good production record and then asked her what made her work so hard.

"I am working for a second front in 1943, for common victory with the Russians," the working girl replied.

"You gave the wrong answer, Maud," the foreman said to her ironically. "You should have said you were working for His Majesty's peace of mind, or for the sake of the Empire."

Maud Green was discharged from the factory on some flimsy pretext, but she drew the correct conclusion from her fate. Addressing a meeting of working women after she had been discharged she described herself as the first of

the host of workers who would be found "redundant" after the war.

The policy of the "armchair" generals and the top-level leaders in London was mirrored in the policy of British diplomatists in Moscow.

Although the war had brought the Soviet Union and the Western Powers into the same camp, the mood of the diplomatic corps in wartime was dominated by the atmosphere of deep suspicion which had been engendered in earlier years. The effusive tributes to the Red Army paid by Western statesmen were not matched by their representatives in the Soviet capital, where pip-squeak officers and arrogant young secretaries of embassies felt free to vent to sarcastic comment on Soviet achievements for which they would, to say the least, have been howled down by the English or American people in their own lands.

In these diplomatic circles admiration for Russians diminished in converse proportion to the Red Army's successes. By the time the enemy had been driven from Soviet soil, suspicion had turned to something near to hatred.

English diplomatists expressed their condescending sympathy for the sufferings of the Russians but refused to recognize that pugnacious fighting spirit which millions of Soviet people were demonstrating in the defence of their Soviet regime. The representatives in Moscow of Britain and America alike were particularly disposed to underrate the importance

of the partisan movement in the parts of the Soviet Union occupied by the Germans, evidently because they were afraid of its popular character. The Associated Press, one of America's most powerful newspaper agencies, went so far as to instruct its correspondent not to send any news about partisans. Excessive publicity, the newspaper proprietors no doubt considered, might encourage the popular masses of Europe to reject the advice of their rulers sheltering in London, and to go so far as to rise against the occupiers.

Foreign diplomatists in Moscow propagated the comforting "theory" that the Russian people were defending not the Soviet regime but their fatherland, independent of its social structure, that the Red Army's successes were due to a "miracle," to the innate virtues of the Russian man. American military representatives in Moscow were especially active in decrying the Red Army's achievements. There was a Colonel Park, who explained that the Soviet offensive at Stalingrad could not be called a genuine military operation, since the Germans had anyway "planned their withdrawal"! When events at Stalingrad showed up this vicious nonsense, his chief, General Michela, came to his rescue with the suggestion that the Germans had acted wisely in permitting themselves to be encircled since "they would in this way contain a large number of Russian troops throughout the winter."

Whenever I happened to discuss Soviet successes in these diplomatic circles, I had the impression that at the back of their minds these representatives of the Foreign Office and State Department were nursing the hope that with each step the Red Army took towards victory, Russia's power was being sapped, and that at the end of that long road to Berlin, they envisaged a war-weary, docile Soviet State which, to win the good will of the world, would abandon its economic and social principles, "liberalize" the Communist regime, and perhaps even open the frontiers of the Soviet Union to foreign capital.

These diplomatic observers, naturally, warmly greeted and often themselves invented scraps of evidence with which they could "prove" that at the end of the war little would be left of the ideas and practice of Marxism. It was a nine-day wonder in diplomatic circles when an American courier, travelling from Vladivostok by the trans-Siberian route, reported to the U.S. Embassy that he had noticed signs of an "abandonment" of the collective-farm system. Scarcely less excitement was caused in British circles when an officer stationed in Archangel reported a conversation with some disgruntled shop assistant in which the latter was supposed to have begged the British to remain in Russia so that he could open a private shop.

Each patriotic manifestation by the Ortho-

dox Church was interpreted as a sign of the Russian people's "retreat from Communism." When each Easter eve, the diplomatic corps flocked to the Moscow Cathedral to watch the picturesque ritual of the Orthodox Church, many of its members probably slept the sounder that night because they believed they were attending not the celebration of Christ's Resurrection but the funeral of Communism.

All information about the situation in the rear of the German army, received through Soviet channels, was written off as "propaganda." When I returned from one of my earliest trips to the front, I described how in the region of Mozhaisk, which I had been visiting, the local Communist Party organization had gone underground after the Germans came and had continued its existence, preserving all the organs of Soviet power, so that after liberation the question of re-establishing this power did not pose itself. I was listened to with sceptical smiles.

These circles could not, indeed, and did not want to face the truth that the population of the liberated areas greeted the return of Soviet power joyfully, that during temporary occupation Soviet people risked their lives just to defend it. To have admitted that would have been to depart from the argument that the Soviet regime held the masses in subjection.

This argument about the "oppressed masses" was one of the pet theories of ruling circles in England. It was being constantly reinforced by the evidence of various "Russian specialists" employed in foreign missions in the Soviet Union. Among them were to be found officers and diplomatists, described as "Russian specialists" for the sole reason that they had studied the Russian language in Russian émigré families in Paris or, in the past, in Riga or Tallinn; others were considered authorities on the Soviet Union because they belonged to English or French families, who had owned shops, factories or concessions in tsarist Russia. But the majority of them were of Russian "White," or even German origin, in some cases quite recently naturalized.

And when, as the war progressed, it became clear even to those whose eyes were clouded by prejudice that neither the Communist Party nor the Soviet people as a whole were in any way willing to abandon their principles, but on the contrary considered their victories to be an endorsement of the correctness of these principles, voices began to be raised that the Russians were "difficult allies." And while this "difficult ally" at the cost of its blood was wearing down Hitler's armies and then went over to a victorious offensive, British and American diplomatists were dwelling in the land of their "difficult ally" and engaging in anti-Soviet activities.

When in 1941 I arrived in Kuibyshev I found that many diplomatists of different countries represented in Russia were linked not by the common fight against Hitlerism but a common hatred of the Soviet Union. That was easy to understand: those of my colleagues who lived in Russia before the war spoke of the inseparable friendship between von Walther, secretary of the German Embassy, von Herwarth, private secretary of von der Schulenburg, the German Ambassador, and "Chip" Bohlen, Durbrow (of the U.S. Embassy) and John Russell, a secretary of the British Embassy.

By 1941, most of the members of the original group had left Moscow, but they had passed their mantles on to their successors. The most important feature of the diplomatic "bloc" remained. This was the practice of pooling all information about the Soviet Union obtained by American, English and French agents and observers. Gradually the embassies of other countries were drawn into the "pool," the leadership of which was shared by the Americans and British who used it for their intelligence purposes.

Certain diplomatists who resolutely refused either to contribute to, or to draw from, the "pool" were considered outside the pale of decent diplomatic society because of their "un-collegial behaviour." Such was the case with the Czechoslovak Minister, Zdenek Fierlinger, and later with Roger Garreau, representing

Fighting France. Others whose countries were considered too insignificant for them to be taken into full partnership went to the most humiliating lengths to ingratiate themselves with the senior partners.

However, in addition to the "pool" the British Embassy had its own more experienced intelligence agents.

By far the most remarkable event in this sense was the appointment of George Hill to a senior diplomatic post in Moscow.

Among the books which I had bought at a London bookstore before leaving for Russia was one called "Go Spy the Land" written by Hill. I read it on the voyage, and found it to be a racily written account of the activities of a British secret agent in the Russia of 1917-18. It left the reader in no doubt that the author, a Royal Flying Corps officer with experience in reconnaissance work, had been one of Britain's secret representatives at a time when every effort was being made to frustrate Lenin's plans to end fighting on the Russo-German front. These efforts were a complete failure, as were the acts of diversion and terror to which the Intelligence Service turned after the October Revolution. Nevertheless Captain George Hill had been handsomely rewarded for his pains, becoming one of those rare exceptions to the rule that the Intelligence Service always disowns its unsuccessful agents. The book closes with a tribute to spies and

the suggestion that in the future—it was published in the 1920's—the most promising field for their activities was to work against Bolshevism.

This veteran spy passed for a man of easy-going nature and took pains that no other opinion should be formed of him. Short, plump, slightly bow-legged, ruddy-complexioned, his head hairless as a billiard ball, he represented in wartime Moscow a type which was rare enough—the elderly *bon viveur*. In fact he was a man equipped with all the qualifications for a spy. Of extravagant tastes, his suspension from intelligence work after the lack of success of his mission in revolutionary Russia left his life grey and burdensome. But ingenuity and natural energy, and a capacity to take hard knocks without losing his ambition for power and comfort, and his undoubted gift for showmanship, had seen him through a variety of professions before he was recalled to intelligence work at the outbreak of the war.

Under the façade of bonhomie he had a cold, calculating nature, and his reputed frankness was but one of several masks put on and taken off at will. In turn the candid friend welcoming a heart-to-heart talk, the shrewd negotiator, the appreciator of anti-Soviet jokes in the American manner, the sentimental lover of the Russian people, his true self was a mystery to all.

Just what Hill did between the two wars is not known with any certainty, but his masters were apparently not displeased with him, for when I arrived in Kuibyshev the diplomatic corps was abuzz with stories of the generosity and the excellence of the table of Major—no longer Captain—Hill. Soon he was promoted to the rank of Colonel, and before the end of the war he had risen to Brigadier. Between 1942 and 1945 he headed a special Military Liaison Mission in the Soviet Union.

Hill's appointment was generally considered in diplomatic circles as a gesture of contempt of the British Government towards the Soviet Union. No reasonable person could assume from this appointment anything else than a decision to re-establish a foreign espionage net in the Soviet Union. It was not long, however, before this appointment had a boomerang effect. It was soon noticed that contrary to hopes and expectations the Soviet authorities had no intention of permitting the British and American military missions to examine their operative plans and engage in espionage. The vigilance of the Soviet people, to which the Germans owed their fatal miscalculation of Soviet Union material and moral strength, was not relaxed and nobody intended that it should be.

George Hill's mission was treated with studied politeness by the Russians but in that very courtesy there was a tinge of scorn,

as much as to say: "Don't think we don't know you. All right, if you like to stay here, please yourself, but don't count on doing us any harm. You did not manage to do any earlier and you won't do any now."

Hill himself was not a man to be daunted by such treatment. He possessed two attributes essential to the making of an intelligence agent, stubborn persistence and indifference to snubs. Who of the British or American correspondents was not invited to the sumptuously furnished house on Granatny Lane with its bouquets of fresh flowers, its well-stocked wine cellar and excellently prepared food, its attentive young Russian-speaking officers? And who, after being given a good lunch and a cigar, was not led by the portly little Brigadier into his private study for a "heart-to-heart talk about Russian affairs"? Soldiers as well as officers of the various military missions in Moscow, and a wide selection of diplomatists, were received no less regularly as guests in the house on Granatny Lane. Hill undoubtedly had a wider knowledge than anyone else of the contacts between foreigners in Moscow and Soviet citizens.

When he happened to be in the company of any Russians, Hill observed each of them with close attention, interested above all in what situation they held in society and what influence they had on their compatriots. If he came to the conclusion that they were ordinary peo-

ple, rank-and-file citizens of the Soviet land, then he at once lost all interest in them and should he meet them a second time in the street or at the theatre did not return their bows. To those who for some reason aroused his curiosity he clung like a leech.

The espionage activities of British diplomatists during the war perhaps reached its peak in the scrupulous and broad-scale use made by the British Embassy of that part of the Polish emigration at that time in the Soviet Union, which was closely linked with the reactionary Polish government in London. Little time passed before the Polish Embassy and Military Mission were transformed into branches of the British secret service. However, the so-called "Polish question" deserves more detailed examination.

It will be recalled that in 1941 Poles who had fled from the German occupation, were being assembled in the Kuibyshev and Saratov regions. Men of military age entered the Anders army, hoping that as well-armed and trained soldiers, they would sooner or later participate in the fight with the Germans. The civilian refugees from occupied Poland were evacuated into the depths of the Soviet hinterland. Among all of them there was a deep conviction that under the stress of war a new friendly basis of Soviet-Polish relations would be found.

But the majority of the representatives of the Polish government in exile, then in London

(and hence known as "London Poles"), had an altogether different outlook on the future of Soviet-Polish relations and did their best to inculcate the mass of Poles with distrust of the Soviet Union.

In the first place, Polish military and political intelligence officers, acting under British instructions, let it be known that it was the duty of every Pole to pass on to the authorities every scrap of information about the Soviet Union. Soon there had accumulated in the Polish Embassy stout files of information, copies of which found their way into the diplomatic "pool." When in 1943 the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with the "London Poles" the British made no secret of their acquisition of these files. Diplomats visiting the Polish Embassy were shown an enormous map marking the places where Polish refugees lived, and were offered information on every conceivable subject concerning life in the U.S.S.R.

Defeatism reigned among the senior ranks of officers who derived for the most part from the old, narrow Polish military caste. Polish staff officers in the Grand Hotel in Kuibyshev, used to talk quite openly about their plans to set up a temporary Polish state on the Volga after the collapse of the Red Army, to serve, quoth they, as a base from which to stage a Polish counter-offensive on the Eastern front with eventual return to Warsaw. With this ob-

jective, they used to argue, it would be unwise to throw Polish divisions into action beside the Red Army when their training is completed.

It was a very dark day in Poland's tragic history when tens of thousands of patriotic Poles who had enlisted in the hope of facing the enemy on the Eastern front were withdrawn on the eve of the greatest battle of the war and sent on the long journey through the Middle East which for many was to end in the arid life of exiles.

Encouraged by their sponsors in London Polish reactionaries in Kuibyshev campaigned openly against the idea of a second front in Western Europe. They were haunted by the fear that the Western Powers would spend their strength too early in the war, calculating that Poland would be liberated by Western armies striking through the Balkans from the south. For Polish reaction that would have provided the only possibility of seizing power in the country.

Many of these ultra-nationalistic Poles had at the back of their minds a Central Europe in which their country, federated with Czechoslovakia, would be the predominant Slav power. From the beginning, the project had received the official blessing of the Foreign Office. Bruce Lockhart, the notorious British agent, had much to do with the preparation of these plans. He was assisted by Victor Cazalet,

Churchill's personal aide-de-camp, known for his pro-Munich, pro-Hapsburg views. Cazalet belonged to a family that had owned valuable property in tsarist Russia. His views on Czech-Polish relations, outlined to friends in Kuibyshev, which he visited at the end of 1941, were what the Foreign Office considered "sound." The Poles, he said, were popular with the British Right, the Czechoslovaks with the British Left. Let them combine, and they would command the sympathy of all Britain.

The successes of the Red Army made nonsense of all these ephemeral plans. They still lived, however, in the minds of certain Poles and must be considered as one of the motives why Anders and his staff officers were already in the winter of 1941 plotting the withdrawal of Polish forces from the Soviet Union in order to place them under British command for an eventual campaign in the Balkans.

In the East the Soviet Army was gaining victory after victory. The second front in Europe had not yet been opened. It was plain that Poland's liberation would come from the East. Now the "London Poles," a handful of self-seeking and ambitious men who were wholly unrepresentative of their nation, had but one card left to play—to sow enmity between the Slav peoples, to raise the banner of resistance in Poland not against the Germans but against the Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians.

Such was the plan of Anders, supported by the Foreign Office.

It was obvious that the Soviet Government could not maintain relations with this government of Polish traitors. The break came soon. Public opinion in the West, influenced by the insidious propaganda of the Polish émigré government, lavishly financed by the British Government, was asking itself anxiously: what would be the future position of the Soviet Government in relation to Poland? This was the reason for my addressing some written questions to J. V. Stalin.

This happened in Moscow in the spring of 1943. I asked Marshal Stalin whether the Government of the U.S.S.R. desired to see a strong and independent Poland after the defeat of Hitler Germany, and, further, on what foundation Marshal Stalin considered that the relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. should be based after the war.

Just twenty-four hours later I was awakened during the night by a telephone ringing with unaccustomed insistence. It was the Press Department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs with a request to come over immediately. I dressed hurriedly, grabbed my typewriter, just in case, and left the Hotel Metropole with that pleasant feeling of anticipation that a journalist experiences when he is on the scent of a sensational story.

It was one of those pellucid May nights. On the buildings of Teatralny Proyezd the portraits of the Soviet leaders displayed for May Day had not yet been removed. Moscow had celebrated its first May Day after the victory of Stalingrad with a special sense of triumph, and even at this late hour in streets hushed by the curfew, something of the excitement lingered.

"I have the honour to hand you this letter from the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin," an official informed me, and gave me a large white envelope.

"Here are my answers," ran the letter that was given to me.

"1. Question: Does the Government of the U.S.S.R. desire to see a strong and independent Poland after the defeat of Hitler's Germany?"

"Answer: Unquestionably, it does.

"2. Question: On what fundamentals is it your opinion that the relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. should be based after the war?"

"Answer: Upon the fundament of solid good-neighbourly relations and mutual respect, or, should the Polish people so desire—upon the fundament of an alliance providing for mutual assistance against the Germans as the chief enemies of the Soviet Union and Poland.

"With respect,

J. Stalin."

"May 4, 1943"

Thus the Soviet leader's reply, clear, explicit, free from diplomatic ambiance brought down all the plans of the "London Poles" like a house of cards.

Sympathy for the "London Poles" in Western diplomatic circles in Moscow took the form of the darkest prejudice against the democratic group with which the Soviet Government co-operated to rebuild Soviet-Polish relations on a new and healthy basis. No slander was too black to be flung at the Union of Polish Patriots, at the Committee of National Liberation formed at Chelm, at the Government of Lublin. The British military mission bluntly refused to send its representative to the ceremonies attending the presentation of colours to the Polish divisions trained on the Oka to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army.

In May 1944 the delegates of the Polish People's Army visiting Moscow addressed a request for weapons to the U.S. and British Ambassadors. No replies were received. The supplies of British and American arms to the anti-Soviet groups in Poland, however, continued. At the time when the fiery call of the Union of Polish Patriots evoked a warm response in the hearts of all Poles living in the Soviet Union, British diplomatists were echoing the slanders of the Polish government in London about the new Polish Army that was being formed in the Soviet Union.

I remember what an outcry there was after an article I wrote in "The Times," describing how the Soviet Government was helping Polish civilians to preserve their Polish ways and traditions. I had written the article after visiting an orphanage of Polish children in Zagorsk where I found them being brought up in a true spirit of Polish patriotism. And when later, after a visit to liberated Lublin, my enthusiasm got the better of my prudence and I publicly declared my sympathy for the democratic government, I was threatened with dismissal from "The Times." The story is worth telling in detail.

Lublin in those days had no telegraphic link with the rest of Europe. Its only link was a low-power radio station. It was suggested by the Polish authorities that foreign correspondents should send their despatches by voice-broadcast, accompanied with the request that anybody hearing them should pass them on to the newspapers concerned. The experiment was successful and several English radio-listeners telephoned to the office of "The Times" to inform them that I was sending them a message.

When I returned to Moscow, I found that not a line of my messages, which included a description of the foundation of the first Polish Government on liberated Polish soil, had been printed. Soon afterwards, a sternly phrased letter from the editor reached me,

containing a reprimand for having made a "propaganda broadcast for the Polish Government."

Even at the distance of Moscow from London echoes used to reach me of the discussions that went on in the editorial rooms of "The Times" about an alleged "lack of objectivity" in my reports from the U.S.S.R. I had good reason to suspect that the complaints originated in the British Embassy in Moscow, which, no doubt, would have preferred to see a correspondent willing to accept "guidance" on the framing of his messages.

The whole course of Anglo-Soviet relations over the Polish question reflected the class struggle in progress in Poland parallel with the struggle for national liberation.

When leaders of the Polish Peasant Party led by Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, objecting to the constitution of 1935, were ready to abandon it for the constitution of 1921, Francis Biddle, the U.S. Ambassador to the Polish government in exile, and the Foreign Office used all their influence to dissuade them from such a step.

When Mikolajczyk was in Moscow in 1944 he was closely questioned by a representative of the European press about his attitude towards the 1935 constitution. Of all this politician's public statements—and he had the reputation of never opening his mouth without committing an indiscretion—his reply was

probably the most severe condemnation of his own policy that he had ever made. "I am not personally attached to the 1935 constitution, in fact I do not recognize it," declared the man who headed a government formed according to that very constitution. "It would, however, be ungentlemanly to change it," he continued. The correspondents present could scarcely suppress their mirth at hearing "the Polish peasant leader" using a phrase so obviously coined in the British Foreign Office.

On his next visit to Moscow, when he entered the Warsaw Government as Vice-Premier, Mikolajczyk received me again. I asked him what his party's plans were to attract the peasant votes. "We must," he replied "think rather of ways of compensating for the loss of those peasants who may vote Communist. My party will seek support among the urban middle class, especially among elements that are to be dispossessed." It all sounded very much like the way Maniu and Hodza and other Right-wing East-European agrarian party leaders talked before the war.

The anti-Soviet position taken by most Anglo-American diplomatists over the Polish question reached a climax during the battle for Warsaw. Their sympathies were unbounded for Bor-Komorowski, the military representative of the "London Poles," who was responsible for unleashing the forces of resistance in Warsaw without co-ordination with

the Red Army. Warsaw's tragedy was a complete revelation of the treachery of the Polish government in London and of those in power in England.

When a group of correspondents visited Lublin during the Warsaw fighting, they were able to obtain firsthand accounts of the way the premature rising had been provoked by men who put their class interests before their patriotism.

The opportunity this visit to liberated Poland gave for piecing together the story of the Warsaw rising was an exceptionally important one, for it happened at a time when public opinion in the West was being thoroughly bewildered by those official spokesmen and semi-official advisers of the press who grew furious at every mention of the friendship between the Soviet Union and Poland and spread violent and desperate slanders about events in Poland.

At the time of this visit to Lublin the Vistula had been forced both north and south of Warsaw. South of the city, at Warka, Polish and Soviet forces had beaten off fierce attacks of the German panzer divisions. The drive north of Warsaw had not produced the results expected of it because of the stubbornness of German resistance in East Prussia. The Red Army command planned to envelop Warsaw and thus save it from the destructive process of a direct frontal attack.

The Soviet Command's design to encircle

Warsaw was communicated in detail to the Polish forces fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army, and General Zymierski told us that in this plan he and his staff officers had seen the only way of sparing Warsaw from destruction.

For the Polish émigrés in London, however, the main objective was that their representatives in Warsaw should seize power against the will of the people before the arrival of the Red Army and the Polish Committee of National Liberation.

The whole plan of the Warsaw rising had the single aim of seizing all the principal governmental buildings at the moment the German grip on the city slackened. The authority of the Mikolajczyk government was then to be proclaimed. Neither the organization nor the arms available were sufficient to take Warsaw except at the last moment. No preparations were made for a sustained battle. It was, in fact, a political plan.

In the ordeal of German occupation the people of Warsaw, longing for freedom, responded passionately to the call to take up arms. They could not know that no attempt had been made to co-ordinate plans with the Red Army command. They could not know as they fought against overwhelming odds in the Old City, in Theatre Square, and in the Polytechnic School, that the plan of insurrection was such as to render impossible the

effective supply of arms from the air. They could not know that to an offer of weapons from the Polish forces across the Vistula, Bor-Komorowski had refused to give the bearings of the two places outside the city where they could be parachuted safely. Only later the survivors in the ruined city were to discover how they had been betrayed by Mikolajczyk and his fellow-politicians, with London's active support.

One January afternoon, six months after the Warsaw rising, I looked at the city from an observation point on the roof of a villa in Saska Kepa. Nearby the tangled girders of the Poniatowski Bridge plunged through the frozen surface of the Vistula. The little box-like houses of this fashionable Warsaw suburb were scarred with shrapnel. Behind us liberated Praga was cold, hungry but in the grip of patriotic enthusiasm. But across the Vistula, Warsaw seemed dead. Its fires had ceased to burn. In the western sky there was a red streak like a banner drooping in honour of the city's dead. A dark and tragic range of ruins was carved against the sunset. From beyond them came low-toned noises, the thud of collapsing walls, the groan of a metal beam twisting under the weight of debris. From the right bank of the Vistula Polish soldiers, who remembered Warsaw as a city peculiarly tender and gay, looked with anguish at this tragic sight.

I have thought it worth while to dwell in some detail on the Polish question because it shows in all clarity the dark treachery of leading circles in England in the days when the Soviet people were locked in tense heroic struggle with Hitler Germany.

CHAPTER VII

THE PEOPLE SET THEIR
LANDMARKS

Throughout the world the news of the victory over Hitlerite Germany was greeted with a profound joy mingled with tears of grief that had been stubbornly held back during the days of war.

On Victory Day I thought of my dear friend, a remarkable Czech woman, beheaded at Charlottenburg on May 25, 1943. Her bravery in the Pankrac prison became legendary. Another Czech who had shared her cell modelled her head in bread crumbs after her friend's execution and sent the tiny model back to Prague with her clothes. She had a beauty reminiscent of Botticelli's "Flora." Before her death this faithful daughter of the Czech people had written a letter that breathed the belief that one day a new Czechoslovakia would arise.

That new life came to Czechoslovakia after

its liberation by the Soviet Army. A Czech friend belonging to Prague intellectual circles wrote to me about that day of liberation:

"We heard loud cries of joy. People were running from all sides towards the Soviet tanks. The Russians—our liberators—seemed to us like brothers from whom we had been long, far too long separated, with their kindly smiles and brave looks. They embraced our folks, they caressed the children, gave them sweets and took them on their cars and tanks. This was one of the best impressions of my whole life. May we never again be separated from our dear brothers!"

This is how another of my Czech friends wrote to me:

"It was the Russians! I lived through the most wonderful moments of my life. How tired those young soldiers looked, standing in the open turrets of their dusty tanks which had broken through the mountains—a living personification of everything that the word Russia meant to me—noble, generous people with such broad natures. . . . I felt at once that they were our people, that they were not foreigners to us. The tanks rolled by, not stopping, but behind them came a truck. The driver, a Ukrainian, took our little Slavka in his arms, kissed her and said that he had a little girl at home of her age."

Eastern Europe's days of liberation were the beginning of new roads for those lands.

In English official circles much had been said about Eastern Europe being too enfeebled after the war to recover without considerable technical and material help from the United States. They talked about "economic aid" but had in mind political enslavement. But the liberated peoples of Eastern Europe rejected this "aid." Phoenix-like from the ashes, Eastern Europe rose from its ruins, rose with the help of the Soviet Union.

New life was created in the tension of struggle with those who went on pressing the countries of Eastern Europe towards the clutches of America, people who did not want to understand that the days of Munich were long past.

I saw this new life for myself during visits to Czechoslovakia and Poland. A plane from Moscow brought General Svoboda, Prime Minister Fierlinger and members of his Government back to Prague. We circled over the ghastly ruins of Warsaw, high over Wroclaw, where new life was just beginning to beat, and in the late afternoon crossed the state borders in the Sudeten Mountains.

"How beautiful it is," exclaimed Vaclav Nosek, the miner's son who became Czechoslovak Minister of Home Affairs, as we craned our necks to enjoy the view of picturesquely tangled mountain ranges. We all agreed with him. Indeed this land to which we were returning was beautiful, with its villages so frequent and compact, its rivers so trimly

regulated, its fields spread in such neat order. And then it seemed almost at once we were over Prague, shyly half veiled from us by a blue-grey mist through which the calm Vltava gleamed with pearly softness. We landed on Ruzyn airfield with its wrecked German planes, its red flags and Czechoslovak tricolours.

I was back in Prague again. What had become of her after so many years of occupation and war?

* * *

The hall of Prague's Alcron Hotel any afternoon during the first few months after the end of the war was the sump into which poured all that was rotten and doomed in Czechoslovak society, all the elements that were moved by ambition and fear. Here were industrialists who had hurried back from Switzerland and Argentina to reclaim their property and save what they could for themselves, Sudeten Germans in panic-stricken search of sponsors for their Czechoslovak citizenship, without which they were threatened with the loss of their houses; American UNRRA officials who during the Munich crisis were notorious for their anti-Soviet attitude and who were now not allowed to visit Czech metallurgical plants on their "errand of mercy." Shifty-eyed men with reputations for being

able to "fix things" in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, keeping appointments with businessmen hoping to export their capital. Here were disgruntled generals who had banked on an American liberation of Prague and were now faced with the loss of their 5 per cent commissions "paid in dollars" on the armament contracts drawn up in London. Here one could meet sleek young women trying to overcome the habit of speaking German and waiting to be picked up by someone going to American-occupied Plzen.

In a small room at the back of the hall black-market operations were conducted by a Croatian conjuror whose favourite practical joke was surreptitiously to remove the braces of the victims of his humour. Here slivovice could be bought, at 1,600 koruny a bottle, from a waiter who used to work for the Gestapo. A slim young man with long eyelashes, claiming to be one of the greatest landowners in Moravia, invited guests to his estate if they could find petrol for his car. When he learned that the only people who had the right to distribute petrol were the Russians, he shuddered and returned to his lemonade, a sugarless ersatz, the colour of iron rust.

Everybody was waiting—for demobilization, for the foreign armies to leave Czech soil, for the promised improvement in the food situation, for trucks bringing their furniture from London, for their wives from Sweden, for the

return of their property, for some sort of counter-revolution to begin, for someone, maybe, to offer them an American cigarette.

In the restaurant reserved for officials and politicians you could see the self-indulgent Monsignor Hala who with his aspect of the good-natured village priest combined a flint-hard heart of a Jesuit; Peter Zenkl, National Socialist leader whose "nationalism" consisted in plotting to surrender his nation's independence to America and whose "socialism" stopped short of nationalizing the country's key industries; Vaclav Majer, Minister of Food, envied by many of his fellow ministers for the amount of liquor he was able to lay his hands on; and around each of these venal representatives of the old order, the younger generation of Czech politicians, jostling for place and favour, the Duchaceks and Stranskys and Taborskys, calculating shrewdly which party it would be most profitable to enter.

All these dregs of Czechoslovak society obstructed the activities of the people, preventing them from taking the new road. And it was just among these retired politicians, among these who regarded the new Czechoslovakia with mortal hatred, that the British and American authorities searched for—and found—supporters for their subversive work in Eastern Europe.

It soon became obvious that Anglo-American diplomacy in postwar Czechoslovakia

intended to exercise all its influence to hinder the execution of the broad plans for the economic, political and social reorganization of the country, which most Czechs and Slovaks wanted to see carried out in the shortest possible time. Subsequently the British and American Embassies used the Right-wing of the so-called opposition parties for their aims—elements which on their instructions prepared a reactionary coup d'état, fortunately discovered in time by Czechoslovak democrats.

The Foreign Office did everything it could to prevent the Czechoslovak people from taking the path to socialist construction and friendly co-operation with the Soviet Union. Under Ambassador Philip Nichols, the British Embassy in Prague spared no pains to influence the course of political developments in Czechoslovakia. This, in the first months after the war, meant trying to convince President Benes to restrain the activities of the progressive elements in the government, which had been formed after prolonged negotiations between the leaders of the four parties forming the National Front.

The President referred to these demarches in an interview he granted me in the Prague Hradcany in July 1945. In reply to my question as to how far Czechoslovakia was likely to go in introducing measures of socialization and nationalization, the President made it quite clear that, as far as his influence ran, he was

not going to tolerate a repetition of what had happened after the first world war. "Then," he said, "the Anglo-French bourgeois in their fear of Bolshevism had prevented the Czech and Slovak people from establishing a socialist state."

"We cannot count," he remarked with his characteristic manner, almost professorial, of emphasizing the points of his argument with precise gestures, "we cannot count on those influences not being brought to bear on us once more. But there are three new factors. Firstly, the existence of the Soviet Union as a great power; secondly, the authority of the Communists in our country, which is the result of their quite clean record of resistance; thirdly, the lessons of Munich, which will cause our people to look on the West with acute suspicion for a very long time ahead. Do not be misled by the respect my people have for the British war effort. It is real, genuine, sincere. But I can assure you that it will evaporate in a second if, firstly, people suspect that Britain is trying to turn us against the Soviet Union, and secondly, if they see Britain conspiring in the rebuilding the aggressive strength of Germany."

"Some of your people," the President concluded, "talk to me about making Czechoslovakia a bridge between East and West. Well, you know what Jan Masaryk said about that analogy, that the trouble about bridges is that

too many people cross them. We don't want any more people crossing Czechoslovakia."

The first summer of peace provided me with many occasions of seeing how steadily the Czechoslovak people's friendship with the Soviet Union was growing. In Bratislava I attended a mass rally devoted to the unity of the Slovak people. Thousands of people, many of them in peasant costume, assembled in the magnificent natural amphitheatre below the jagged ruins of Devin to give a warm greeting to orators speaking about Slav solidarity.

These new trends of thought in postwar Czechoslovakia were regarded with mounting suspicion by the diplomatic representatives of the Western Powers. I had spent long enough in Prague to be convinced that most of the attempts to disturb the movement towards unity could be traced to Anglo-American diplomatic circles. Every political intrigue or counter-revolutionary conspiracy disclosed, could be traced to the "information offices," the "societies for cultural relations" and special missions through which the diplomatists worked to heighten the "struggle between East and West." Industrialists, bankers, landowners and members of the Catholic hierarchy, longing for the "good old days" and aware that their privileges could only be regained by forceful means, looked towards foreign imperialism for help and support, and

it must be said, were rarely disappointed. The American Ambassador, Laurence Steinhardt, did not hide his liking for such people. It was for them that he organized his sumptuous receptions at which, with the dessert, the ladies were served with nylon stockings in cellophane packets.

Incidentally, the traitors to the Czechoslovak people had, of course, to pay for the nylon stockings and for those other presents received from the British and American diplomats. And they paid with espionage and diversion.

On the frontiers of Czechoslovakia and Germany, Czech border sentries fought back the attacks of bands of diversionists which included German SS-men. The Czechs were convinced that they had to deal with a well-organized line of communications between the armed terrorists and the U.S. zone of Germany, and produced convincing evidence in the form of photographs of American-built trucks and the testimony of prisoners.

Enquiries in Prague left no doubt that this was the case. The British Consulate in Plzen, headed by an intelligence officer who had previously been attached to the Polish forces in London, was virtually a clearing point for Polish renegades. Moreover, diplomatic immunity was being abused to smuggle certain discontented Czechs and Poles between Prague and Plzen. I know for certain that this secret route was used to bring members of

Bor-Komorowski's family from Poland through Czechoslovakia to Nuremberg.

In 1947 there was similar liaison, this time organized by the American General-Consulate in Bratislava, to aid the Banderovci bands of Ukrainian nationalists, consisting mainly of German SS-officers, cross the Slovak mountains and the Austrian border into the U.S. zone.

Anglo-American agents in collaboration with reactionary Catholic priests and "faint-hearted" officials in the Slovak administration helped these criminal nationalists in order to keep alive their hopes that war between East and West was inevitable. It was at this time that agents of Anglo-American reaction were trying to sabotage grain deliveries throughout Czechoslovakia by reviving the Hitlerite technique of spreading rumours that "there would be war by the 15th."

Since the events of February 1948, when the progressive forces in Czechoslovak life struck a decisive blow at the reaction in their midst, the centre of subversive activities against the Czechoslovak Government has moved to Washington, as was revealed in April 1949 by a spokesman of the so-called "Council for Free Czechoslovakia"—an organization of reactionary Czechoslovak émigrés.

The Czechs had formed a far from flattering opinion of the Americans within a month or two of the end of the war. This was the result

of the loose behaviour of American troops in Western Bohemia. "G.I. Joe is girl-crazy"—the Czechs said. I had some personal experience of American manners in Western Bohemia. Sleep was made impossible by the raucous songs of tipsy American soldiers who traded cigarettes and for a tin of food bought the love of a hungry German girl. To some extent the relations between the Czechs and the American forces were also affected by the lack of tact with which the Americans defended the interests of SS-men and German prisoners of war.

The most shameful of all the activities of Anglo-American diplomats directed against the interests of the Czechoslovak people was the attempt to hinder the expulsion of the Sudeten-German minority. They refused to settle the Sudeten Germans in the American and British zones of occupation in Germany and used diplomatic pressure in Prague. The Foreign Office, which had delivered Czechoslovakia up to Hitler, now had the nerve to preach to the Czechs about the "inhumanity" of expulsion. It appointed a Vice-Consul in Karlovy Vary, one Bamborough, who admitted to me that his main responsibility was to collect material about "atrocities" on Sudeten Germans.

No doubt Anglo-American diplomacy hoped to make of the Sudeten-German question yet another "problem" like those which they had

used in the past to divide apart the peoples of Central and Southeastern Europe. But the Czechoslovak people soon saw that in the Soviet Union they had a friend on whose help they could count for certain for a settlement of all questions. At the Potsdam Conference the Soviet delegation firmly and unambiguously supported the Czechoslovak view, which was that swift and radical solution of the Sudeten question was the only way for creating normal relations in the future between Czechoslovakia and a new democratic Germany.

I had occasion to be in Prague several times since the war and was able to see with my own eyes how much mischief was done by the British and American Embassies as they tried to destroy the unity of the nation, encouraging and inspiring the reactionary leaders of the bourgeois parties. When the Czechoslovak reactionaries were unable to get their way by propaganda and political intrigue, they tried to achieve it by sabotage and the preparation of conspiracies and a coup d'état. But they ran up against the resistance of the people, who were fired with the determination to create a Czechoslovakia on new foundations.

Looking back on the Eastern Europe I had known before the war, what has struck me most is the vast change that has taken place in the attitude of the lands of that region towards each other.

This new spirit of harmony in Eastern Europe is especially notable in the development of their economic relations.

A striking example of it is provided by the work of the Council for Polish-Czechoslovak Economic Co-operation, founded in 1947, an account of whose achievements and plans I was given recently by one of its most prominent members, the Czechoslovak official Dr. Loebel. Explaining the series of agreements on joint planning, transport, foreign trade and joint investment that have been reached, he called my attention to their salient feature of integrating Polish and Czechoslovak economy so that there should be a large division of labour between the two countries, each concentrating on developing those industries for which its resources best suited it.

This program had by the end of 1948 led to Poland placing large orders in Czechoslovakia for capital equipment, in exchange for food and raw materials. In prewar Eastern Europe, such measures of economic integration between Poland and Czechoslovakia would have been inconceivable. Each country has begun to work on the building up of joint sources of power supply in the industrial areas of Polish Silesia and Moravia in Czechoslovakia.

But of all the changes that are taking place in Eastern Europe as a result of liberation from alien occupation and the baneful influ-

ences of reaction, the industrialization of Slovakia and the rehabilitation of Polish Silesia are perhaps the most notable.

Slovakia is being industrialized at fifteen times the pace of the days when it was under capitalist control. In this way an end is being put to the artificial retardation of "backward" Slovakia's progress. Nowhere except in the Soviet Union has so rapid a tempo been set.

This progress, which has left its mark on practically every valley and hillside town of Slovakia, has been possible only because the new Czechoslovakia has placed its export economy on an entirely new basis.

For a land that has embarked on an ambitious, far-reaching development plan, stable markets in which to buy and sell are essential. Moreover it is as important that trade should be according to principles of mutual interest and full respect for national sovereignty. The planned socialist economy of the Soviet Union and the countries associated with her in the Council of Mutual Economic Aid is thus the mainstay of Czechoslovakia's and other East-European countries' projects for improving their economy.

In the past, the great hotels which look out over the mountains and forests of Slovakia housed privileged guests from Prague and Bratislava, from Budapest and Vienna. And when the short holiday season was over the

owners put up their shutters and packed off. When I visited the Tatra Mountains not long ago it was to find these hotels crowded with workers and peasants, many of them paying nothing for their stay.

Prague's foreign diplomats complained that the fishing was "spoiled" and that it was no pleasure "to climb the mountains in the company of ordinary people." But that did not worry the Czechoslovak workers much. For the first time in their lives the masses received the best that the nation could offer. Today Slovakia, the land of song, is singing to a new tune. The sad, mournful songs of the past, the wistful songs of the enslaved, have yielded to bright, buoyant tunes.

In the summer of 1948 I drove from Bratislava to the nearby village of New Kosariska. In appearance it looks a typical Slovak village, with its painted cottages fronting a broad village street, and imposing gates opening on to long farmyards. It lies on the fertile loam of Zhitni Ostrov. Once this village was inhabited by Germans. It was awarded to poor Slovak peasants in the postwar reshuffle of landownership. Three years ago its inhabitants lived in another village—Old Kosariska. This had been one of Slovakia's poorest mountain villages. There was little land, and what there was of it, did not yield much. Many had emigrated to the U.S.A. from there, in futile search of happiness.

In 1942 two Russians, escaping from German imprisonment, found refuge in Kosariska. For two years they were concealed and cared for by the villagers. In 1944, when Central Slovakia rose against the Germans, these two Russians rallied the village to take part in the rising. As a reward for their patriotism, after the Germans and their collaborators had been driven off the people of Kosariska had been placed high on the list of those who got grants of confiscated land.

In the mountain village they came from, only two peasants owned more than two hectares of land. In New Kosariska each family received about twelve hectares after the land reform. At Old Kosariska the railway station was 14 kms. away; from the new village it is only ten minutes' walk. In 1948, all the electors of Kosariska voted for Klement Gottwald's Government. Now the days when people dreamed of "happiness" in America are long past.

So all the prophecies of British and American diplomats that Czechoslovakia would "not be able to stand on her own feet" without American aid, came to nothing. Faced with the choice between the Marshall plan and national independence, Czechoslovakia chose the latter, and as for help, she receives it in abundance from the Soviet Union.

What has happened in Czechoslovakia is true for all the lands of People's Democracy.

Let me give an example from Poland. The establishment of Poland's frontiers on the Oder has provided the best possible solution of the problem of frontiers between Poland, Czechoslovakia and Germany. The Poles, confident of the support of the Soviet Union, interested in seeing a strong and democratic Poland, have had some remarkable successes, especially in Silesia.

My first postwar visit to Oder-Silesia was in 1946, when Wroclaw was still in ruins and too moribund even to deserve the name of a city. But when I returned there in the autumn of 1948 for the World Intellectual Congress for Peace it was to find a busy thriving city, surrounded by well-tended land from which a rich harvest had just been taken.

In 1948 an exhibition was opened at Wroclaw, devoted to the new conditions established in Silesia. In pavilions designed and decorated by the nation's most talented artists, one learned of the effort that had been made to overcome the serious handicaps of extensive war damage. The war consumed a large part of the agricultural assets of the regained territories. About 124,000 farms were completely destroyed or seriously damaged. The loss of livestock and especially of draught animals was especially heavy. Most of the tractors were destroyed.

Soon after the end of the war, while Wroclaw was still smouldering with war damage,

two families of farm labourers from Central Poland moved to a German farm, about six miles from the city. Gradually, other Poles came. When I called at this farm in 1946—most of its barns and stables were still roofless—there were 11 cows and 3 horses. I noted at that time that if one wanted to test whether in taking over the new territories the Poles had bitten off more than they could digest, this half-wrecked, deserted farm provided it.

In 1948 I visited the farm again. I found 120 Polish families in possession, the stables and cow sheds full, heavy sheaves stacked ready for carting and an average production above prewar.

I called on Halina Matuszewska, whose husband used to farm land in overcrowded Central Poland. The year before, she told me, they raised enough to live from and to build up their stock. In 1948 things were easier and they were selling to the co-operative. She also sent her son to Wroclaw to sell milk and eggs. The farmers were proud of their achievements.

"Do you fear the Germans might come back?" I asked one farmer.

"We don't even dream of it," he answered.

The industrial enterprises Poland took over in the regained territories were damaged and destroyed, without personnel, technical direction, plans of installation and production. At the end of August 1945, 413 enterprises

were in operation, employing about 75,000 hands. In two years these numbers had been brought up to over 1,300 and 304,400 respectively.

This almost complete re-manning of the coal, metallurgical, textile, paper, sugar and power industries of the regained territories is a feat for which Poland has been given little credit in the West, though European economy as a whole has been drawing great benefits from Silesian coal mines, where production per man-hour is higher than anywhere in Europe.

Apace with agricultural and industrial development, there have been changes in the cultural life of the regained territories. The material basis, i.e., school buildings, libraries, theatres, museums, were destroyed to a not less degree than the material basis in other fields. By the end of 1948, however, primary, secondary and higher educational facilities were available for all Poles in the regained territories. The role played in these territories by books deserves special mention. In view of the mass destruction of Polish books by the Germans the "famine for the printed word" existed in Silesia as much as in other parts of the country. Already in 1947 there existed in the regained territories a system of district and communal libraries thanks to which books were reaching the remotest parts of the country.

Visiting one of these libraries one day, I recalled a meeting in Lublin in 1944. In the offices of "Rzecz Pospolita" the editor, Jerzy Borejsza, still wearing the uniform of an officer of the Polish Army with which he had fought from its first engagements on the Eastern front, outlined his plans to correspondents. At the time they sounded grandiose, even unrealizable. Warsaw was still in German hands. The German army was still strong and full of fight. But Borejsza and his friends were inspired by the hope aroused by the liberation of the first narrow strip of Polish soil.

"Do you know where the idea of creating a great publishing house serving the state was born?" he asked us as he pointed to a huge chart, illustrating his plans. "It was on the Oka, where the First Polish Division was training. Polish books were rare in those days and I was touched by the way our soldiers treasured them almost as dearly as the handful of Polish earth some kept in their knapsacks. I said to myself in those days that when Poland was free, I would work to make books available to everybody in the country." In this way was the Polish progressive publishing house "Czytelnik" born. In 1948 there was laid the foundation stone of its great new headquarters that is to rise in the heart of Warsaw.

It is not surprising that the remarkable successes of the new Poland should have aroused

the fury of its enemies, not least among those the diplomats who represented the United Kingdom and U.S.A. in that land. This fury was of a far from passive nature. Let me give a few examples.

I arrived in Warsaw one afternoon in March 1946, and presented myself at the British Embassy's press department in order to read its summaries of the Polish press. A middle-aged lady of rather impressive bearing, introduced as the Countess Malinowska, gave me the necessary material and I settled down in a corner of the crowded office to read it. After a while my attention was aroused by a compelling hissing signal from the side of the table where the Countess sat. I noticed that she was carefully and surreptitiously pushing her dictionary towards me with a pencil. I picked up the book, opened it and found a folded sheet of paper marked "destroy." Inside it I read: "If you think your paper would be interested in the underground's views, let me know. A meeting could be arranged." The next day I heard that the Countess was describing me as a "particularly haughty type of an Englishman." I should, it seems, have known that such invitations were not to be spurned so lightly.

The Embassy was in some sort of "flap"; people were rushing to and fro along the corridors of the Hotel Polonia, where British diplomats were then temporarily housed. I

asked the first secretary, Michael Winch, what was up. Winton, the assistant military attaché, he told me, was trying to organize "a Russian-hunt" over the week-end. It transpired that he had made up his mind to "prove" to London that Russian troop movements were going on near Warsaw and now he was recruiting huntsmen for a Saturday afternoon "expedition" into the countryside on the pretence of looking for "datchas." I drove with them into the pleasant countryside of sandy heath and pinewoods of the valley of the Vistula. Stopping at innumerable kiosks to make small unnecessary purchases Winton, who spoke Polish fluently, enquired about available datchas—and about the Russian troops. But his hopes of finding the Red Army faded as fast as the spring day.

There were long faces of glum looks in the Polonia that evening. The "hunters' bag" consisted of but one Russian—an employee of the Soviet Embassy engaged in the peaceful occupation of digging a vegetable bed in the garden of his datcha. All the same, the stories appearing in the London press of troop movements around Warsaw persisted without any denial from the Foreign Office.

In Michael Winch's rooms one could always be sure to meet a Polish politician, but he was invariably a member of one of the opposition parties; there were many Poles employed in the Embassy's press department but they

were without exception members of the former ruling class: There were foreign journalists in Warsaw; most of them, however, seemed to be combining journalism with other functions: the Associated Press correspondent, Larry Allen, with editing the U. S. Embassy's information bulletin, the Kemsley Press correspondent, Selby, with intelligence work connected with Polish terrorist bands. The Polish authorities regarded Selby as a dangerous renegade, and this assessment of his character seemed to be borne out by the only conversation I had with him. I met him in the lift of the Hotel Polonia, a slightly built, fair-haired young man with a violent, reckless and rather debonair expression. "What Poland needs," he said, in reply to my casual enquiry about the political situation, "is another blood-bath. Civil war is its only road to salvation."

The U.S. Embassy was at that time headed by Arthur Bliss Lane, a heavy-drinking gambler who had been minister in Belgrade in 1939. When I called on him in Warsaw he let loose a series of anti-Soviet stories so absurd that they could hardly have sounded convincing to anybody, let alone to a journalist who had spent five years in Moscow. The prize went to the one that the wives of Soviet officers returning from Berlin to Moscow were arrested on the Soviet frontier, forcibly shaved and dressed in "Russian national costume," in

order, the American diplomatist assured me, that the Soviet people should not be demoralized by the sight of permanent waves or European clothes. "My people have seen it happen," he declared.

Any Englishman or American travelling in Eastern Europe after the war was likely to be fallen upon by all kinds of traitors, malcontents and rascals, who saw no other way out of their dilemma except war or emigration. They sought their ends by all kinds of pestering, beginning with the discreet approach of the well-to-do manufacturer ready to pay a foreigner handsomely if he were willing to go through the formality of marriage with his daughter so that the family could get foreign passports, and ending with concrete offers of "exclusive valuable information." It may be assumed that such people did not lack English or American attention.

Soon after my return in 1946 from my trip in Eastern Europe I was asked by the editor of "The Times" to go temporarily to the British zone of occupation in Germany.

"We may take it for granted," he told me, "that the Russians will now be mainly concerned with putting their house in order and that this will not be likely to provide the paper with much interesting news."

"The Times" like most other English newspapers had apparently decided that the least said the better about the restoration of nation-

al economy going on in the Soviet Union. A start had been made with the conspiracy of silence, which aimed at drawing an impenetrable curtain before everything that was happening in the land where the people had embarked with such energy and enthusiasm on its postwar tasks.

CHAPTER VIII

WHITHER GERMANY?

The grey and cheerless city of Berlin lay in ruins, its wrecked buildings hollow and gaping. On many streets there was such a silence that it seemed the heart of the city had ceased to beat. But if one looked carefully at the city, one saw that it was not only alive but was beginning to creep towards a new future.

The afternoon was drawing to a close; fleecy white clouds were being driven eastward by a fresh breeze, ruffling the waters of Müggelsee where little steep waves tossed spray on to the sandy shores. Puffs of brick dust burst out from the ruins of Köpenick. A crowd of lanky, weed-tall German youths streamed from the cinema where "Chapayev" was showing. The faces of some of them wore the self-conscious smiles of people who had been given an unexpected forbidden pleasure. Others were engaged in earnest conversation. Their thin paper-soled shoes made a harsh gritty sound as they grated

on the dusty pavement. Around a kiosk where the addresses of German prisoners of war in the Soviet Union were listed, stood a group of German women of all ages, most of them wearing shawls over their shoulders and shopping baskets on their arms. In the geometrically neat, asphalted playgrounds between the frowning plain walls of surviving buildings children skipped and played happily. Along a straight featureless road a crowd of workmen moved, heading for the allotments, pushing and pulling makeshift barrows, exchanging tobacco pouches of chopped nut-leaves and the smoking mixture they called "the last gift of a comrade," because it was made of laurel leaves gathered from the dried wreaths from cemeteries. A long line of women wound up a huge pile of bricks. They were taking it easily, passing brick after brick in leisurely fashion.

Sometimes one met Berliners who had already learned the lesson of Germany's defeat and who were facing the future with some confidence.

In a little box-like house near Wendenschloss a German turner, a shy, quiet man, told me: "We can say what we think now. Do you know what the 'German look' is? Glancing over your shoulder to see if anybody's listening to you. We've finished with that now. We feel free."

Another German, the anti-fascist Goeschke, who was a member of the provisional city coun-

cil, said to me in his office: "Before us still lies the struggle for the complete eradication of Nazism from Germany. That is our responsibility to the people. We have to expiate our guilt before we can be accepted again in the family of nations as decent people. It is now our task and our duty to prove to the masses that our choice was correct. In that we shall need the help of all true anti-fascists in the world. They must help us to get out of the pit into which we German people have been thrown by Nazism. I have known the inside of four concentration camps, Sonnenburg, Lichtenberg, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. I hate the murderers of my comrades, but I have a deep love for those who survived and who sincerely wish to build a new Germany without fascism, whatever party they belong to, whatever political belief they subscribe to."

Thus did the revival of the new democratic Germany begin; I saw for myself how the Soviet occupation authorities were doing all they could to help the Germans establish democracy in their country quickly, so as to give it the chance the more speedily to return into the family of democratic nations. In Dresden I saw the terrible damage inflicted by the Anglo-American air forces during an unnecessary raid. But a stronger impression was made on me by the determined spirit and the desire to rebuild their city quickly that the city authori-

ties had inspired in the people of Dresden, than by this pointless destruction.

I saw, too, that the German peasants had received land which used to belong to Junkers and big landowners. So it was in the Soviet zone. And what did I see in the other zone, occupied by the army of my own country—England?

The next spring, in 1946, I was transferred to the British zone of Germany. I found it in the grip of stagnation and hopelessness.

Ernest Bevin, as Foreign Secretary, was using his influence in the Cabinet to hinder any positive advance being made towards the denazification of Germany, or the solution of the German problem as a whole in the spirit of the Potsdam Agreement. Bevin had his own plans which were not to be revealed until they had been fully co-ordinated with the plans of the U.S.A.

The partisans of Bevin's policy, entrenched in the Political Intelligence Branch, sought by every means to aid Kurt Schumacher, self-appointed leader of the SPD (German Social-Democratic Party). In this they were frequently at variance with those honest, unprejudiced men who at that time were to be found working in the British Military Government in Germany.

At Dortmund, Hagen and other cities of the Ruhr and the Rhineland, I heard the bewildered complaints of these officials, who, coming to

their jobs with a genuine enthusiasm and real determination to carry out the Potsdam programme, were deeply shocked at the cynical chicanery of the political directives they received from the Foreign Office.

Not only was nothing being done at that time in the British and U.S. zones to restore economic life; on the contrary, administrative muddle and artificially-created difficulties were being used to clear the way to the formation of a Bizonia under American leadership.

This was best shown in the Ruhr. Let me give an example. Once I attended a technical conference in Essen where the problem was being considered how to restore the city's sewerage, blasted by Anglo-American bombing. We were shown on the map those places where English block-busters had smashed the main drainage pipe under Essen's principal streets. Then we clambered over piles of debris in the working-class district of the town. All the cellars and basements of the mean miners' cottages were flooded with sewage. We watched people digging in sogging clay in deep trenches. They wore broken shoes with thin cardboard soles. But when we gathered again in the office to hear reports on how repairs could be effected, how workers could be provided with rubber boots and overalls, how temporary houses could be provided to shift the workers from their fever-ridden flooded cottages, it was to learn that such things were out of the ques-

first paper to be licensed in the American zone. As a Jew and anti-fascist, Emil Carlebach, Communist, passed 11 years in Hitler's concentration camps. At Buchenwald he was a leader of the camp underground, helping to save many lives. Carlebach emerged from Buchenwald a fighter for a democratic Germany. With three Social-Democrats, another Communist, a Catholic and a non-party progressive, he was named an editor of the "Frankfurter Rundschau" at a time when only proven anti-fascists were being selected for the press according to the spirit of the Potsdam Agreement. The newspaper demanded a purge of the Nazis. It advanced the cause of peace by continually calling on all anti-fascists to cooperate.

But after several months General Clay, head of the American Military Government, removed Emil Carlebach from the "Rundschau" on the grounds that his "political views and traits of character" were "unsuitable" for the paper. It was a sign of the way the Anglo-American authorities sought to isolate the Communists, and, above all, to prevent the formation of a united German front in the struggle for the resurrection of a new, democratic Germany.

No single factor contributed so much to the atmosphere of drift and futility in the British zone of Germany as the displaced persons camps, containing for the most part Poles and

citizens of the Soviet Baltic republics. Theoretically, their inmates had freedom to start new lives according to their wishes. In practice, however, this freedom of choice was denied them, since the camps were under the control of a caucus of fanatical reactionaries who withheld from the internees objective information about conditions in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

I visited a number of these camps while I was in Germany and each time left with the impression that a veritable reign of political terror had been imposed on them. The bulk of the people yearned for home, but they were kept in a state of constant fear by all kinds of wild rumour about their countries.

The camps for displaced persons from the Baltic states, most of which were situated in the north of Germany, were specially notable in this respect. The most reactionary elements, traitors who had collaborated with the German occupiers of their lands, had imposed their rule, censoring the newspapers, controlling the schools and other institutions in the camps. The so-called "Baltic University" near Hamburg used a curriculum in which the worst features of reactionary education were preserved. Riga lawyers opened offices to continue "disputes" about property rights that had long been settled by the socialization of Latvia.

One day I learned that nearly all the inhabit-

At the foot of the letter there was scribbled "Pinecker is a Communist," followed by an indecipherable signature.

"Who wrote that?" I asked the president of the court.

"Ah, that I am not at liberty to say. It is a confidential note," he replied uneasily.

I asked him whether the law permitted arrests to be made for political offences committed during the Nazi regime.

He returned my gaze with a look of disarming candour. "But this is not a political offence. Pinecker was found guilty of a civil offence, and there has been no amnesty for such offences."

"And Pinecker's six months in a concentration camp, does not that absolve her from further punishment, even if you are legally entitled to inflict it?"

"Ah, a concentration camp. That was a purely extra-legal affair. The Gestapo, you know. Nothing to do with us. We represent the forces of public order. Sabotage is a serious crime."

"And the swastika on the envelope, the seal of the Nazi Public Prosecutor's Office on the letter? How are they to be explained?"

The president hummed and ha'd. Shortage of paper . . . difficulties in getting new seals cut . . . lack of staff. . .

Take another example. The secretary of the Gelsenkirchen Communist Party, Fritz Tara-

schewski, formerly an active member of the resistance movement in Holland, was arrested in mysterious circumstances and deported to Holland to face a charge of murder.

I learned that Taraschewski, who had escaped from a German concentration camp in 1937, had been living underground, and when the Nazis invaded Holland this sturdy anti-fascist had fought in the ranks of the Dutch resistance movement. The Nazis had not been able to catch him and now he had been arrested by the British occupation forces.

"After midnight," Taraschewski's wife told me, "half a dozen German policemen, armed with carbines and accompanied by two British officers, broke into our home and removed my husband. For a month he was held in the Recklinghausen prison without any opportunity of consulting his lawyer or of communicating with his family. Yesterday I was informed that he had been taken to Holland to be charged with the murder of a Dutch Nazi official killed during a partisan operation."

A hero of the resistance, ex-political prisoner of the Gestapo, arrested by German police under British supervision and delivered up to reactionary organs of justice in the very land he had fought to liberate! And this within a year of the day when we had celebrated so joyfully the victory over fascism!

Or consider the story of Emil Carlebach, onetime editor of "Frankfurter Rundschau,"

I saw German youths greeting each other with the Hitler salute. In the Hamburg region a clandestine organization calling itself "Radical-Nationalist" was discovered. It possessed its secret arsenal, concealed in a British aerodrome, its military staff and secret police. An English court released the majority of the arrested members, the judge stating that he wished to give them a "second chance in life." A second chance for what, is it permitted to ask?

When a British Member of Parliament solemnly declared in 1946 that for him freedom meant freedom to be a fascist if one wanted, he echoed what was in the minds of many who held important positions in the British Military Government in Germany. However, it was not only in their minds; it was put into practice. British authorities had sanctioned the reinstatement of notorious German Nazis in high positions. The North-German Coal Control flouted the decisions of denazification courts and the protests of progressive German opinion. At a school for training leaders of future German youth movements near Hamburg (run by an English clergyman), Kurt Silex, formerly an energetic exponent of Goebbels propaganda, was for several months invited to take part in political discussions. Was it to be wondered at that, these examples before him, the average German worker should doubt the good faith of the occupying forces that had replaced the Nazis?

One day I received a call from a young German woman, a worker called Erna Pinecker. It transpired that she had received a letter summoning her to report immediately to serve a sentence of imprisonment for having absented herself from work in a war factory in August, 1944. The envelope in which this letter was sent bore a large printed swastika and the official seal of the Nazi Public Prosecutor's Office at the Wuppertal Civil Court.

Erna Pinecker told me how, during a raid in 1944, the house she lived in was destroyed, how she had left the job, gone home, how she had been denounced and how, because she was expecting a child, the court had suspended sentence and turned the case over to the Gestapo, who had sent her to a concentration camp where she gave birth to a stillborn child, how finally she had been released after the defeat of Germany. And now this summons had come. If she did not obey it, she would be arrested again.

I put Erna Pinecker in my car and drove to Wuppertal. In a gloomy black building guarded by German police I found the president of the Landgericht, a tall lean man with the face of a fox. I asked to see the documents on the case of Erna Pinecker. I read what more than a year after the war the German police authorities had written to the Public Prosecutor. "Pinecker is now in a position to serve her sentence because her child is dead."

tion, that allocations of material were earmarked virtually exclusively for the restoration of mines and factories.

The first preoccupation of the Allied coal bosses, installed as the North-German Coal Control in the hideous mansion that had belonged to the Krupps, was to make as quick a beginning as possible with the extraction of the Ruhr's riches.

I got to know a German mechanic from the Krupp works. In 1942 he had been mobilized and rushed to the Ukrainian front, where he was captured early in the war. He asked me to his home, a house in a row of depressingly standard homes close to the autobahn that rings the Ruhr. In the attic he had built a pigeon loft, and one day, sitting on a beam before the empty cages, he told me his story.

"When I was in the prisoner-of-war camp, there were endless discussions about the kind of Germany there would be after the war. Coming from the Ruhr I knew—it's the first political lesson we all learn here—that this is the part of Europe where wars are born. Put the Ruhr in safe hands, and Europe's safe, that's what I believed. Well, you've seen for yourself what's going on here. Ex-Nazis being released on the excuse that without them coal production can't be raised, yet the miners not allowed to organize their unions. Do you know the jobs Nazi women have been given in that mine across the autobahn? Distributing ra-

tions! Do you think any miner trusts them at that job today, when you can sell a slice of bread for 35 marks on the black market?

"It's true that Krupp's and the mines have been taken away from the old owners and put in British hands. They don't need to tell us what they are going to do with them, we can guess that for ourselves when we see the Nazis being put back into managerial posts.

"Why is it we miners starve for lack of meat while there's plenty on Hanover farms? Why is the food landed at Hamburg and meant for Essen being diverted to other parts of Westphalia? Because over one half of the members of the Food and Agriculture Office are former members of the National-Socialist Party, and the department itself is headed by the notorious Schlange-Schöningen."

Schlange-Schöningen I knew best as the author of a book called "Bauer und Boden," which when published in 1933 had been warmly approved by the Nazis. And now Schlange-Schöningen's plans for land reform in the British zone were being studied by the Food and Agriculture Office under British control.

I saw much in the British zone of occupation in Germany that was evidence of the disgraceful tolerance of the administration towards fascist activity in their zone. Driving through the country districts of Westphalia and Schleswig-Holstein I had been astonished at the number of swastikas displayed. Not infrequently

splitting Germany against the interests of the people has been played by Kurt Schumacher. This faithful servant of American imperialism and true follower of Bevin has run through all the stages of treachery, from demagogic chauvinism veiled under the argument that Western Germany should have its "rightful place" among the Western Powers, to open attempts to gloss over Germany's war guilt and appeals for the revival of a German heavy industry, capable of fulfilling Germany's "mission in the East."

Schumacher was a zealous supporter of the plan for dividing Germany in two parts which the Western occupation authorities put into operation, ignoring the interests of the German people. No doubt he saw in this a first step towards the federalization of Western Germany, a step towards the remobilization of Germany for a new war against the East.

I first met Kurt Schumacher during a Social-Democratic congress called in Hanover, an event to which his British friends attached very great importance, as was indicated by the presence of British officers and a big group of correspondents of German origin wearing British military uniform, on whom the Foreign Office could safely rely to put Schumacher's case forward in the English press.

Liaison between the SPD leadership and the British authorities was entrusted to Schumacher's assistant, Heine, who as a former po-

litical exile in England was thoroughly well versed in the methods of British political intelligence work.

The canteen in the Hanomag factory where the congress was held was decorated with red bunting, and Karl Marx's name was freely used during the speeches. Schumacher's tactics at the congress were cunningly designed to present the Social-Democratic Party as a radical Left-wing party, striving for the independence of Germany. His demagogy did not succeed in concealing the fact that on no single issue had he gained a point for the German working class, whom he so vehemently claimed to represent, and that nothing that had been done in the British zone since the capitulation of Germany indicated that the cause of Socialism had made the slightest progress there. Schumacher talked about international Socialism and called on the delegates to sing the "Internationale." But it was no secret to anybody that he was engaged in secret talks with the Dominican monks of Bonn to find an "ideological platform" on which Social-Democrats and Catholics could collaborate in a struggle against Communism. He declaimed that no Socialist need look further left than the SPD, because he well knew that his masters would never tolerate a Germany "more left than Bevin's Britain."

It was a congress held in the choking atmosphere of falsehood and treachery, of servility

labour corps. In the house next to where I was lodging the German chauffeurs of the press camp were commanded by an officer who maintained discipline in the strictest German army tradition. Even in the concentration camp at Recklinghausen for Nazi officials, the authority of the party bosses was unchallenged by the British authorities.

The same spirit that brought Nazi managers back to power in the coal mines and factories and left compromised officials in municipal government led to the handing over of authority to ex-officers and ex-sergeant-majors in the organization of the police and other public services.

And so I found myself constantly remembering the worker I had talked with in the cottage near Essen. What impression, I asked myself, could the impact of this "new Germany" have on his bewildered mind? How could he regard "the English way of life," "the democratic liberties" of which so much was written in the English-controlled press?

In the American zone of occupation a vulgar tin-can civilization, offensive to all European traditions, was being imposed on the German people. Along the banks of the Upper Rhine and in Bavaria reigned an atmosphere of black-market transactions, whoring, raucous drunkenness.

When you drove through small German towns in the British zone on a Sunday

afternoon you did not hear "hot jazz" squawking through the loud speakers or see groups of G.I.'s whistling obscenely at the German girls. Yet the British regime could appear scarcely less heartless, less brutal in its insensitiveness to German susceptibilities than the American. In Düsseldorf and Cologne thousands of homeless lived in stifling air-raid bunkers. I saw how in the port of Hamburg 20,000 seamen drifted from job to job—as they still are drifting today.

Poverty and unemployment continue to grow in the Western zones. But the Anglo-American occupation authorities are in no way concerned about that. Their aim is a single one: to restore Germany's military potential, and to direct it against the Soviet Union. In pursuit of their selfish ends they are engaged in a policy of splitting Germany and of her complete political and economic enslavement.

In order to realize their plans for the division of Germany and for its transformation into one of the main springboards for the future war against the Soviet Union, the Anglo-American authorities have turned to the most reactionary parties of Germany, and have found servile helpers there. The German Social-Democratic Party and the Christian-Democratic Party alike have made considerable efforts to split the German people and to hinder the creation of a united and democratic Germany. The principal role in this activity of

war. At a time when the working people of Western Germany were enduring wretched poverty, these people were far from experiencing any serious difficulties. Their arguments on political and economic affairs were identical with those of the average German business-owner I met in the British zone. Many of them had escaped the denazification process because, as military men, they took no leading part in the NSDAP or affiliated organizations. Their tradition and background was summed up for me by a German friend who mixed in this military caste by the following slogans to which it had subscribed in succession:

Long Live Bismarck!

Long Live the Kaiser!

Long Live Hindenburg; down with the Reds!

Long Live Hitler!

Long live the Christian-Democratic Union!
(Because there's nothing further Right at present.)

When are we going to fight Russia again?

This category of ex-officers, in common with a section of German youth in the Western zones, was to a greater or less degree contaminated by Nazi ideology. It was in conversations with men of this type that one heard unconcealed longings for the "good old days." Democracy was spurned as a "weak and ineffective method of government." Proud, arrogant and bitter, they lived in the hopes of a future which they could not envisage without

war. Many former ex-regular officers, and even youths sitting on students' benches, obviously did not consider their army careers to be at an end.

Privileges of military rank were being maintained in student circles in Bonn and Münster universities, where a large number of ex-officers were studying. These minions of Hitler did not yet want to admit that the German army was beaten because it had met a stronger army. Some of them attributed defeat to errors of Nazi strategists, others, more openly Nazi, claimed that Hitler was deceived by his subordinates. One of these people explained to me with an arrogance that could be attributed only to his intense nationalism: "Germany must have living space in the East. If you do not give us these things then the German nation will rise against you again one of these days. I would support any party except the Communists to this end."

The present openly anti-Soviet policy of leading circles in England and the U.S.A. is, undoubtedly, not only encouraging this revengeful mood but is inspiring all these former Hitlerites to various anti-Soviet and anti-democratic provocatory actions.

The British occupation authorities made broad use of the services of ex-Nazis. The vast army of Germans who attended to their needs in Western Germany was a para-military organization, as were the large groups of the

ants of one camp for Poles on the road between Soest and Hamm had decided, against the "advice" of their camp leaders, to return to Poland on a repatriation train leaving in a few days' time. But when I reached the camp it was to find baggage being unpacked and plans altered. I learned the reason from a thin, worried-looking Polish woman with three young children clinging to her skirts. The camp commandant, furious at the way his authority had been challenged, had slyly announced that the Polish Red Cross organization in London was sending a special shipment of food and clothes to the camp. Such was the need of the people that this ruse had been enough to cause them to postpone their plans to return to their country.

Naturally, these camps became hotbeds of crime. A heavy responsibility rests on the Anglo-American occupation authorities, who had turned the camps for displaced persons into breeding grounds of lies, provocation and terror. And while in the camps for displaced persons people were being starved and terrorized for no other reason than that they desired to return to their countries, in the special camps for German criminals, the British authorities conducted themselves with an excess of kindness.

I visited one camp near Iserlohn reserved for former officials of the NSDAP. Except for a few light duties confined to cleaning their

rooms, its 1,800 inmates did no work. I asked what they did all day. "Oh, they attend lectures," a British officer replied in an offhand manner. The library, removed from a nearby mansion, consisted mostly of works on German military history. The lectures, given by ex-Nazis to ex-Nazis, were mostly about theosophy, metaphysics and the works of Friedrich Nietzsche. I took a book from the hands of an ex-Nazi, a dapper insolent young man as fresh as a daisy. He was sitting in a group of interneers who wore thick overcoats and held trilby hats on their knees. "The Sword of the Spirit," the book was called. It was an anthology of quotations from Nietzsche's works. Under the title I read "Words for German Fighters and Soldiers."

What was going on in this camp under the wing of English authorities rang with a specially blasphemous note because nearby lay a common grave in which were buried hundreds of Soviet soldiers who had fallen in the struggle with Nazism, a struggle fought so that in England too there should be democracy.

There was, however, no need to search in camps for ex-Nazis to convince oneself of the liberties they enjoyed in the Anglo-American zone of occupied Germany. That was apparent at every step one took. It was sufficient, for instance, to see how ex-officers of the Wehrmacht lived. Conditions of life for most of them were but little worse than before the

for Anglo-American imperialism and bestial hatred of the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. Depressed with what I had seen, I walked through the gigantic pile of rubble, where among tottering buildings with gaping windows, the haggard, sullen, unemployed wandered utterly hopeless, gathering scraps of metal and timber to buttress their miserable homes. Along the main roads a stream of British staff cars headed for the country club—"Für Deutsche verboten."

A little later I came to the headquarters of the SPD, where I interviewed Schumacher. The tall stiff-necked man who was the most impassioned enemy of the German Communists drew his chair closer to mine and laid his hand on my knee when I told him that I had been in Moscow throughout the war. For the first time he looked me straight in the eyes with a fixed look that reminded me unpleasantly of what one had heard of Hitler's attempts to hypnotize his guests.

"Tell me frankly," he said with great intensity, "is it true that if the winter had not been exceptionally early in 1941, things might have turned out very differently for us?"

Schumacher accompanied his question with such a knowing look, and had spoken with such feeling, that I could read into it nothing else than a burning desire to set his mind at rest about something that had been gnawing at it for years. And as he sat back waiting

for the reply, I knew that the gaunt, feverishly intense man opposite me was consumed with a burning hatred for the Soviet Union, that this was the passion that dominated his life, that he would stop at nothing to destroy Communism.

I looked into his maniac eyes before replying to his question.

"I think I know what you would like me to reply, Herr Schumacher," I said at last. "But there is no doubt that the winter of 1941 began later, not earlier, than usual. However, may I tell you something that may provide you with the reason why your forces did not reach Moscow?" And I told him about the spirit of the Soviet troops that had passed me on their way to the front when I was accompanying the civilian evacuation in autumn 1941. I told him what I had seen at the station in Yaroslavl. And I told him, too, about the people's partisan movement.

Kurt Schumacher abruptly changed the subject. He invited me to question him about the congress. After a while I commented that he had said some highly critical things about the British occupation regime. His face, which in repose wears an expression reminding one of a frightened horse, creased in a smile. He gave me a knowing glance and said slowly: "I don't think that any objection will be taken to those remarks by your Political Intelligence people. Rather, the contrary. . . ."

On the theme of working-class unity he expatiated at length. Co-operation with the Communists was altogether out of the question. Had I read the scandalous things they were saying about him? How could one work with such people? But among the Catholics there were some reasonable people with whom common ground could be found.

The attitude of encouragement which the British administration adopted towards the anti-popular activities of the Social-Democratic and Christian-Democratic parties was accompanied by a hostile attitude towards the genuinely popular policy of the German Communists. On quite an unjustifiable excuse the "Westdeutsches Volks-Echo," the principal newspaper of the German Communist Party in the Ruhr, was ordered to surrender a large part of its paper to the Christian-Democratic Party, which even at that time had opened its ranks to ex-Nazis. The editor of the Communist paper received a letter from the chief of the English press control warning him that it was a "crime" to edit the paper from a "political standpoint." No such vigilance by the British officials was to be noticed when it came to dealing with the Right-wing and Social-Democrat parties.

I became convinced during my stay in Germany that the German Communist Party was the only party striving to create a united and democratic Germany.

I had an opportunity in the Western zone to meet Max Reimann, one of the leaders of the German Communists. Neither his sparkling dark eyes, nor his rather debonair manner revealed the iron will of the miner who had joined the German Communist Party in 1919 to work selflessly and courageously for the cause of Communism. He had spent six years in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Slight, almost delicately built, and at that time still suffering from the effects of his incarceration, he travelled indefatigably throughout the Ruhr, systematically building up the party organization in the face of much official opposition. He seemed indeed to draw his moral and physical strength from his contact with the masses. The Ruhr workers loved him for his sincerity and warm nature, his devotion to duty and his unquenchable honesty.

His political enemies circulated all kinds of slanders about him with the hope of reducing his authority with the German people, but I was in his home and found him living with his wife and child in the half-starved conditions that were the lot of the German workers he represented, and I could not have heard better sense spoken so simply and intelligibly. The smart fellows of the political branch of the British Military Government in Germany had assured me that I would find a man racked with worries as the result of their campaign against him. But they had not succeeded in

breaking his confidence in the future. I found him gay and full of energy.

"We Ruhr workers," he told me, "know our enemies better than anyone—those Ruhr industrialists hiding behind the backs of the Military Government. We have only one request to the British. Give the workers' organizations full powers for denazification. We shall do a good job. How can the British expect the miners to work while reactionary forces still control the industries and mines of the Ruhr? There is one question our workers will never fail to ask: For whom and for what are we working? For peace or for war? The British underrate the expectations of the Ruhr workers, but I can tell you that sooner or later we shall call to account the traitors who deceive those expectations and put the Ruhr back into the hands of the men who made Hitler."

Max Reimann was put in prison by the British because he raised his voice to declare this basic principle of the struggle of the German people.

On the journey from Berlin to Moscow—I drove through Poland and Byelorussia—I thought over a great deal of what I had seen and heard in Western Germany. I had been shocked by the audacity with which Britain's Labour rulers were handing back power to German reactionaries. Of course, there were bound to be differences in the methods of approach to the German problem made in the

Eastern and Western zones. But that did not necessarily mean the ruling out of a final agreement among the powers interested in the German question. I felt certain, though, that with every step the Western Powers took towards reinstalling the former owners and managers in the Ruhr, the chances of that agreement receded.

I drove from ruined city to ruined city. Life triumphed over the jagged remains of Warsaw. It swirled through the dusty streets of Brest. Minsk stood clothed in scaffolding under a serene August sky. Parched Byelorussia met us with songs and dances. In the orchards of its collective-farm villages the "Apple Feast of the Salvation" was being celebrated.

Late one night we drove into Moscow, and as we circled the city along the boulevards, Moscow shone and glittered like a great house celebrating a family festival. The mood of the crowds breathed confidence, hope and vigour. Each day the press carried new stories of the way execution of the postwar recovery plan was taking shape. Sun-tanned loose-limbed demobilized soldiers strolled through the city, resting and looking around before taking up peacetime jobs.

This enthusiasm for peaceful labour was to be found everywhere throughout the Union. I went to the Donbas, to the works of Makeyevka, to Voroshilovgrad and Stalino rising like groves of clean dazzling young birch trees

from a tangle of undergrowth, to pitheads where the last of the flood waters were being pumped out and the first cages were ready to go underground. And I thought: the years of war have destroyed the Donbas and the Ruhr. During long years of war Europe has been deprived of the wealth of these two regions which can do so much to ease the lives of the people. Was it true that now the natural wealth of the Ruhr was to be put back into the hands of those very men who had already used it to create such havoc in the Donbas? Was the West taking leave of its senses to return power to the war criminals?

That torrid summer turned into autumn, and when the first powdery snow outlined the gables of the cosy mansions of the Arbat district, the sinister picture of Western Germany almost faded from my memory. Never had Moscow attracted me so strongly. I wandered about its streets and parks. People went about their business with a sense of urgency, as if they were in pursuit of what they had lost. Along the broad gleaming highways that had been carved out of the chaos of old Moscow, work was being resumed on those great blocks of homes whose carcasses throughout the war had symbolized the abrupt halt that had taken place in the reconstruction of the Soviet capital. Moscow was now regaining that atmosphere of dramatic transformation which before the war had made it the most exciting city of

Europe. Factories that had been stripped of their equipment during the wartime evacuation were already within sight of prewar levels of production. Nowhere else in Europe did the war, so recently ended, seem so long past.

I was jolted from my dreams of a world growing harmoniously towards a real stable peace by being assigned by my paper to report the Council of Foreign Ministers session on Germany.

* * *

The German problem, and in particular the future of the Ruhr, dominated the discussions held in Moscow between February and April 1947, between delegations headed by the Foreign Ministers of the Soviet Union, the U.S.A., the United Kingdom and France. It is necessary to go back a little in order to trace the course of recent developments in the Ruhr.

The Ruhr problem, events had shown, had become one of the most acute of all the problems of the postwar settlement. It was the very kernel of the question whether Germany's industrial potential was going to be used to strengthen a peaceful order in Europe and raise the living standards of its peoples, or whether once again it was going to become a source of war material for a future aggressor. The answer to this question was awaited expectantly by all European peoples; not least,

as I had observed, by the workers in the Ruhr mines, steel mills and chemical plants.

At Potsdam there had appeared to be no serious obstacles to a solution of this problem which would serve the cause of peace. The removal of Nazis and representatives of German militarism from positions of control, the banning of armaments production, the breaking up of cartels and monopolies, the establishment of an international control administered by the four principal powers of the anti-Hitler coalition, and the distribution of the Ruhr's products to benefit Europe as a whole, including Germany, these were measures on which agreement was reached and to which statesmen solemnly put their signatures at Potsdam.

But as early as autumn 1946, the British occupation forces, as a "first step towards de-cartelization," published an order ostensibly depriving many German enterprises of the right to control the allocation of raw materials, the distribution of orders and the fixing of prices. This measure, however, in no way hampered influential German industrialists, who had established a very close liaison with the British occupation authorities. In February 1947, the commander of the British occupation forces, General Robertson, published the law on fragmenting German concerns. This law formally prohibited the concerns listed from taking part in combinations with international or other German concerns. But from this list

were excluded such monopolies as the I. G. Farbenindustrie, A.E.G. and others "necessary for the assistance of the practical aims of the military administration and already under its control." By this the British authorities explicitly revealed into whose hands and with what aims they intended to hand over the Ruhr.

Naturally this Anglo-American policy of supporting the most reactionary elements in Germany and the powerful German monopolies with the intention of turning Germany into a military springboard seriously complicated the prospects of a settlement of the Ruhr problem during the Moscow meeting of the Foreign Ministers.

Foreign diplomats expected that the Russians would be "amenable" during this Conference. Had there not been a drought in the U.S.S.R.? With UNRRA aid to the Ukraine and Byelorussia finished, the Russians must certainly be feeling the pinch. Before the Conference was over they would be begging for American aid, and abandoning all this stubbornness about German denazification and demilitarization. Such was the mood in which many British and American diplomatists began their work in Moscow.

The leading officials of the British and American delegations made little secret of their hostility to the Soviet Union. All members of the U.S. delegation were given secret instructions to avoid talking about any aspect of the Conference in their hotel rooms or even in the

American Embassy, except in a special "microphone-proof" room. It was assumed that all telephone lines were tapped and that all rooms inhabited by Americans were fitted with concealed listening apparatus.

The British delegation and accompanying correspondents arrived dressed as if for an expedition to the North Pole, in the shapeless sack-like coats and heavy wool-lined boots the Foreign Office issues to travellers to Russia. They were surprised, some even a little resentful, perhaps, to find they were to stay in warm, well-lit rooms in the comfortable Moskva Hotel, that a highly efficient organization existed to provide them with cars, food and drink at all times of the day or night, theatre tickets and travel facilities. This all fitted in very badly with the "shabby, uncivilized, unfriendly Asiatic" Moscow they had expected to see. Had Walter Citrine not reported that all Russian baths lacked plugs? And the reports of the journalists W. L. White and Winterton about the "drabness" of the Moscow scene? And Foreign Office stories about the crippling expense of life there? It was obviously not going to be so easy to draw the repulsive picture of the Soviet Union that many correspondents had come prepared for. Of course everybody "knew" that the Moskva Hotel was the only modern building in the capital, and, anyway, reserved for generals and members of the government; and as for

the sweeping up of the snow from the main streets, that was just an act put on to impress the foreign visitors. It was said that new suits had been issued to all people living in the centre of Moscow just before the Conference, and there had been special orders to the Gorky Street shopkeepers to pack their windows for the occasion. And those picturesque shoe cleaners on the street corners, had they not been specially brought from the Caucasus to add a touch of exotic colour to Moscow? And who knew whether, once the delegates had left, the baths and washbasins and telephones would not be taken away from the hotel bedrooms?

Such were the fables the visitors to the Moskva Hotel exchanged.

The visiting London correspondents worked closely with responsible officials. Every morning guidance talks were held for them at the British Embassy. British correspondents resident in Moscow were pointedly excluded. Presumably it was feared that their presence there would disturb the harmonious relations that exist between the Foreign Office and the London diplomatic correspondents visiting Moscow, the so-called "tame seals" or "bedroom boys," the latter a reference to the access they enjoyed to the head of the Foreign Office News Department, Ridsdale, who was always available, day and night.

At their meetings the "bedroom boys" were given the line which the British delegation was

going to follow at that day's session, and every evening they huddled into the Foreign Office spokesman's hotel room to hear his account of that meeting. These press conferences were cynically known as "briefings," a term used in military parlance to describe the instructions to airmen before a raid. Immediately they closed, the correspondents rushed to their typewriters to compose their despatches.

I could not help admiring the skill with which the British Foreign Office spokesman handled his "tame seals." His account of the work of the Conference was factual. The way in which the Foreign Office wanted this material handled had already been given to the trusted few, and considerable pains were taken to stress the "objective" character of the public press conferences. However, by variations of emphasis, by the use of irony or ridicule, and by deliberately underplaying awkward topics, a version of events to the Foreign Office's liking was given. An example of this was the way the very serious Soviet charges against Dinkelbach and other ex-Nazis in British employ were brushed aside. The spokesman stumbled over the German names, did not know how they were spelt and finally dismissed the matter as a minor one, not worth dwelling on. In reality the outcome of the Moscow session of the Council of Foreign Ministers depended to a considerable extent on the solution of the question of denazifying the Ruhr.

Journalists knew enough of what was going on at the Conference to make it clear that the Anglo-American line, which the French delegation had to follow, could not but lead to the collapse of the negotiations, after which the Anglo-American bloc planned to develop Bizonia as an anti-Soviet "preserve." William Strang, representing the Foreign Office in Germany at that time, in his brief talks to the press declared that England had to be "realistic." Being "realistic" in the mind of this champion of the Foreign Office's views meant abandoning "all that nonsense" about democratization of the British zone of occupation, and the complete acceptance of the American policy of free enterprise, which, in fact, meant restoring power to the old masters of German heavy industry, on the condition that they worked for American interests.

My colleague, Pierre Courtade, who attended a lunch given by John Foster Dulles, related that Dulles had tried to convince French newspapermen that France could only defend herself against British attempts to harness France's independence by associating herself with a revived Germany in a West-European federation under American sponsorship. Reports of this luncheon caused considerable alarm when they reached British quarters, since at that time Mr. Bevin and his advisers had been assiduously putting out the theory that it was precisely in close association with

Britain (Bevin had just signed the Anglo-French Treaty of Calais) that France could hope to defend herself against American designs on her independence!

The occasion of the Council of Foreign Ministers was seized on by many well-known American and European journalists as a chance to visit Moscow. Both the British and American Embassies made hurried preparations to ensure that these observers did not present the Soviet scene in a light which could clash with their own frankly anti-Soviet reports. Anglo-American diplomats had vested interests in keeping the truth about the Soviet Union from the public opinion in their countries, since they had gone on record in their reports as to the impracticality of the postwar five-year plan as a means of improving living conditions.

As soon as the foreign correspondents had arrived in Moscow they were informed that there was much information available to them at their embassies. The British Embassy handed out copies of reports on Soviet education, culture and other aspects of Soviet life; the U.S. Embassy welcomed American correspondents with its reports, written for the most part to prove that "the collapse of the Soviet State was inevitable."

At no time during my journalistic experience had I seen such touching scenes of collaboration between government officials and

newspaper correspondents. Some American correspondents spent most of their time in Moscow copying out their embassy's reports. Paul Ward, for instance, correspondent of the Baltimore "Sun," obtained in this way much of the material for his series of articles on the U.S.S.R. For the acuteness of his "observations" on the Soviet Union he received the Pulitzer Prize for 1947 (considered a high award in the West). "Time" magazine's Sam Welles prolonged his stay in Moscow in order to complete his copying out of embassy reports in his notebooks. A year later his book on the Soviet Union, of which one chapter on Soviet education appears to have been based exclusively on material gathered by the British Embassy, was described in advertisements as being the "result of the author's firsthand enquiries" into Soviet living conditions!

Perhaps the palm for ingenious faking should go to the French correspondent Pado-vani, who wrote a description of how Russians lived based on what he claims to have been told by a Russian girl called . . . Misha!

The hall of the Moskva Hotel became the main gathering place of foreign delegates and visitors during the Moscow session of the Council of Foreign Ministers. Haughty white-helmeted American military policemen; knots of excited journalists with notebooks in their hands faithfully recording the words of official spokesmen of the Foreign Office; Amer-

ican generals softly cursing the Russians to their young aides; English typists agog with excitement at the prospect of seeing the first Russian ballet in their lives; a Chicago journalist loudly boasting that he had got a "whole of a story" out of a deintoxication station he had visited, only to have it capped by a French colleague who described how after standing for an hour in Dzerzhinsky Square with a map in one hand and a camera in the other, a militia man had asked him for his documents. . . .

On my way home from the Moskva Hotel those days I used to ask myself why those people were so determined not to inform public opinion objectively about the Soviet Union? What is it, for instance, that sent the diplomatic correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph," Ashley, tramping through the slush of a March thaw to shed tears over some fragment of the Russian Empire in a side street of the Arbat, instead of enjoying the sight of the new apartment houses on the Kaluga highway? What made them so certain that because people are not exclusively interested in their clothes they must be insensitive to culture? That the girl who drives the trolley bus is not capable of love, tenderness and romanticism? That people who dream about construction of new factories in their land and are thrilled by news of the successes of the People's Liberation Forces of China cannot take pleasure in

putting on a new pair of shoes and spinning to the strains of a waltz?

There was a time when some of these people were prepared to regard the Soviet Union as an "interesting experiment," "a short-term visitor" in the world. But they had grown frightened when the visitor made it plain that he meant to stay forever. They had calmed the secret fears aroused in them by Soviet Communism by considering that this experiment was a purely Russian phenomenon; but what they saw in Moscow on May Day convinced them once and for all that on the Red Square the aspirations of the working class of the world converge. And because this frightened them they put their "objectivity" away and became even more assiduous in serving their masters.

Those ten weeks that passed in Moscow clearly showed that a choice had to be made: either to labour with the Soviet Union to create a new democratic Germany, or to set out on a course to rebuild Germany as a weapon of aggression against all that is alive and progressive in Europe, as in all the world.

The Western Powers used the failure of the Moscow Conference to justify an increased tempo in the application of their plans to develop Western Germany in a direction contrary to the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. That they would do so was implicit in the remarks made by Bevin when he received press correspondents before leaving Mos-

cow in April 1947. To him it was clear—that the Moscow Conference had been but another occasion to disengage himself still further from the obligations solemnly undertaken at Potsdam. Throughout his career as trade unionist he had stuck to the principle "you can't get on with Communists" and has applied it consistently during his tenure of office as Foreign Secretary. And he did not trouble to conceal his satisfaction at being able to leave Moscow after the Council of Foreign Ministers with his hands free to make new unilateral moves in Western Germany.

The natural development of the position taken by British and Americans in Moscow led to the fateful day when the world learned of the return to power in the Ruhr of Hitler's arms chiefs.

Of course, the German industrialists and financiers, re-emerging after their temporary disgrace, are but screens for the real masters of the Ruhr, the representatives of Anglo-American capital, such as E. Steel, vice-president of one of the most important coal companies in the U.S.A., the Frick Coke Company, or his aide, Marshall of the Pittsburgh Consolidated Coal Company. German industrialists are now scrambling back into power by permission of the decision of General Clay that "if you make a ruling on the fact that a man made money during the years Hitler was in—you rule out everybody of ability and experience."

Thicker and thicker grows the fog that

cloaks the Ruhr in an atmosphere of political cynicism and revived German nationalism, results of the criminal neglect of the Potsdam principles. And this must remind the German people that they are living on the first battlefield of a future war, a war that can be prevented only by the united efforts of all democrats in the world.

CHAPTER IX

BEHIND THE EMBASSY WINDOWS

Situated in some of those old imposing mansions with which all who know Moscow are familiar, are the embassies and legations of most countries of the world, a consequence of the recognition of the supreme importance of the U.S.S.R. in international affairs.

The embassies have all something of the same character; silent consequential servants meet you in the hall, from where a broad staircase leads to the reception rooms with their gilded decorative furniture in more or less genuine Louis XVI style, their thick carpets and portraits of kings, presidents, shahs... In the ambassador's study, a vast desk, deep leather-upholstered armchairs, autographed photographs of foreign statesmen, the gleam of silver and bronze, and an atmosphere compounded of luxury and comfort, but also of a certain impersonality, a hint to the visitor that there have been previous occupiers of the heavy chair behind the

desk, and that the balding diplomatist who sits in it now is also a bird of passage.

The British Embassy on the Sophiiskaya Embankment is no exception. From the hall, panelled in oak in the style of an English country manor, as imagined by a Moscow furniture dealer, massive doors open on to the ambassador's study, with portraits of English monarchs, past and present, in their imperial regalia, a chancery where voices are rarely raised above a discreet murmur, a library where the counsellor responsible for gathering all information about Soviet life may give free rein to his imagination while he feasts his eyes on a magnificent view of the Kremlin.

But that, so to say, is but the embassy's façade. If you want to find the bustling tempo of modern British diplomacy, comparable with that of a flourishing business concern, you must use the embassy's "side door," and look in the poky little rooms of the wings or in its buildings in the Kalinin or Vorovsky streets. There you will find no costly rugs, respectful servants or massive furniture.

In the chanceries, registries, attachés' offices typists rattle off reports under fluorescent lamps, young secretaries distractedly chase along corridors with documents in their hands, corners are stacked with packing-cases, canvas bags, leather despatch boxes, red, blue, black. . . .

What is going on in this house on Sophiiskaya Embankment? What is the business of these British diplomatists whose ciphered despatches are flashed to London by radio, or carried by the king's messengers who travel twice a week between Moscow and England? And, first of all, what is the policy of the British Government that it is the official function of British diplomatists in the Soviet Union to reflect? To get a clearer picture of what is going on it is necessary to turn first of all to London, the capital of the British Empire.

That policy of British diplomacy is formulated by the British Cabinet, meeting in a three-storey building of smoke-blackened brick in Downing Street, the Prime Minister's official residence. But it is across this narrow street, in the Foreign Office, that the practical methods for handling the relations of the British Government with foreign governments are devised and applied.

On the second floor of the Foreign Office, at the head of a staircase lined with many-hued marbles and statues of defunct English statesmen, is the office of Mr. Ernest Bevin, England's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. It is an imposing office wall-papered in light green with a gold star pattern and, when Mr. Bevin is not there, dominated by a life-size portrait of George III, the monarch whom the average Englishman associates with the mis-

handling of Britain's policy that led to the loss of the American colonies.

In the Foreign Office, with its stuffy, old-fashioned rooms, its lofty, arched corridors and mausoleum-like fire-places, the same group of officials have been sitting for many years unchanged, whatsoever government is in power, except by the normal process of promotion, according to a system mainly based not on merit but on length of service. The Foreign Office is staffed by men specially trained for diplomatic relations, and recruited, in the main, from the more exclusive schools and universities, men who for all their claims to be "genuinely non-political," can be relied on by their ministry to defend British capitalist interests with absolute loyalty. They are those who have conducted and who are still conducting a policy contrary to the interests of the broad masses of the English people.

At the time of the 1945 elections to which Ernest Bevin owes his desk in the Foreign Office, the English people expected that this policy would be changed. They thought that new men would fashion a new policy, based on friendly co-operation with Russia. They elected the Labour Government to carry out the foreign policy promised in the Labour Party programme, "Let Us Face the Future," and also set forth in December 1944, in the plan for the international postwar settlement.

The leaders of the British Labour Party,

when elected, were pledged to co-operation with the Soviet Union and the lands of Eastern Europe. Fulfilment of these pledges would have guaranteed peace in Europe and raised the prosperity of the English masses.

But the Labour Government had not been in power for many weeks before it became clear that it had betrayed its programme and disappointed the hopes of millions by concluding an alliance with the Tories in the field of foreign policy. Nothing changed in the Foreign Office, neither the policy itself, nor those who implement it.

The story runs that somebody once suggested to Bevin that changes in the personnel of the Foreign Office might be advisable with the accession to power of a government pledged to conduct a new foreign policy. To which Bevin replied: "All I have against the present staff of the Foreign Office is that there are too few of them and they are not paid enough."

Bevin's defence of Foreign Office officials showed that even at that time the Labour Government had made up its mind to preserve the continuity of Britain's foreign policy.

Bevin is well known for his boorish and arrogant behaviour. His arrogance, however, is reserved for his dealings with those who criticize him in the party or the press. With those on whom his career depends he becomes quite the English gentleman and it is natural

that he should not only have failed to change the discredited apparatus of the Foreign Office but, on the contrary, have done everything to support it.

The more "independent" his line at public meetings, the further he has fallen under the influence of his advisers. It is not surprising therefore that the man whose appointment at first caused some heads to shake in the Foreign Office, has become so popular that its veteran officials now serve him willingly and devotedly.

The adoption of the principle of continuity in British foreign policy by the Labour Government shows that Labour, like the Tories, subordinates its policy to the interests of American monopoly without any regard for the interests of the English people. The adoption of a pro-American and anti-Soviet policy gave a new lease of life to officials who had been compromised in the years of "appeasement."

Bevin's reign at the Foreign Office, indeed, has been marked by the advancement of members of this "old guard," such as Ivone Kirkpatrick (closest adviser to Sir Nevile Henderson at the Berlin Embassy), who in 1945 became director of the Foreign Office's overseas publicity, and Sir William Strang, who was at the head of Foreign Office departments dealing with the Soviet Union and Germany during the appeasement period.

When Labour came to power, Strang was

named political adviser to Field Marshal Montgomery, and later, to General Robertson in the British Control Commission in Berlin. In 1949 he received the highest post that a permanent official can hold in the Foreign Office, that of Permanent Under-Secretary of State. Strang had been described by his admirers as being "genuinely non-political," as what is known in England as the "faithful servant" who may be relied on to carry out any policy with equal assiduity. But in fact Strang, like all senior British diplomatists, was genuinely devoted only to that policy which may be summed up as the idea that the Labour Government must abandon any illusion that, because it was elected by the votes of the working class, it has a special mandate to improve relations with the Soviet Union.

Thus, the coming into power of the Labour Party meant no significant change in England's foreign policy or the personalities in the Foreign Office who translate it into diplomacy.

All the new government did was to look for new means to conduct that policy. This, in the first place, applied to those innumerable "branches" and "departments" formed during the war years for intelligence purposes.

During the war a whole series of organizations, most of them secret, had been created, mainly for the purpose of establishing a network of agents in other lands. The Foreign Office revived the Political Intelligence De-

partment (PID) which had functioned during the first world war. Under Rex Leeper, the official who was later to become Britain's Ambassador to Greece during the 1944 campaign against the Greek patriots, its function was to direct secret intelligence work in all countries involved in or likely to be involved in the war. In 1939, the job of supervising the Russian section of PID was offered to Bruce Lockhart, the notorious British agent who in Russia, in August 1918, together with the general-consuls of the U.S.A. and France, organized a reactionary conspiracy, known as the "diplomatic conspiracy." Eventually, Lockhart was put in charge of the East-European and Balkans intelligence section.

The work of PID was reinforced by that of a special research department headed by Professor Toynbee and staffed mainly by members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), where, under a mask of scientific objectivity, a great deal of virulent anti-Soviet material had for many years been compiled.

The men of Munich, in particular Sir Samuel Hoare, were also prominent in the Ministry of Information, responsible for propaganda to allied and neutral countries. When Churchill came to power, this Ministry passed under the control of Brendan Bracken, who entered political life after a successful career in financial journalism in the City.

Propaganda to enemy and enemy-occupied countries was run by a highly secret department established in Woburn Abbey, the estate of the Duke of Bedford. Here worked a big group of men and women drawn from many walks of life, businessmen, journalists, school-teachers, advertising experts, stockbrokers, psychologists. They worked in close contact with the émigré governments in England, each of which had its own intelligence service. This secret department at Woburn Abbey was put under Hugh Dalton, Minister of Economic Warfare, in 1940, Rex Leeper remaining the official in charge. It had a top-secret military wing, concerned with the supply of arms and the despatch of agents to resistance movements.

About this organization the story is told that soon after Churchill came into power he came to the conclusion that he ought to make use of European resistance movements; that he thereupon telephoned to Attlee and said: "Listen, Attlee, we've got to help start a revolution in Europe. That's your Party's line, isn't it? Can you suggest a Minister to put in charge?"; and that Attlee, well aware of Hugh Dalton's ambitions in the field of foreign affairs, proposed that the organization should be put into the Ministry of Economic Warfare, which Dalton then headed.

All these intelligence organizations supplied

the Foreign Office and the War Office with a wide range of information.

Already in 1943, voices were raised about the necessity of reforming Britain's diplomatic service when normal conditions had been restored. Smarting under the fiasco of England's prewar diplomatic relations with Eastern Europe and the Balkans, there were those who argued that in the future the Foreign Office would have to make an effort to discover what the peoples with whose governments they were in relation thought and felt.

Writing soon after the end of the war, Richard Crossman, M. P., an Oxford don who had worked first at Woburn Abbey and then as political adviser to General Eisenhower in North Africa and Paris, commented: "What is the next step? We have seen that many mistakes have arisen owing to the exclusive reliance of the departments of the Foreign Office on the partial information received from the embassies abroad. This defect can be remedied by the establishment of an independent Intelligence Division charged with the task of collecting and evaluating all the necessary information, political, social, economic and strategic. Perhaps the present Library* could

* The Foreign Office Library fulfills not only the usual functions of a library, but is also a centre of secret information, where the archives of the Intelligence Service are kept, causing the library to be the most closely guarded department of the Foreign Office. (Author's note.)

form the basis of such an Intelligence Division, but it would have to be greatly expanded and largely re-staffed. This would not be difficult as there have been collected in the various wartime departments, clustered around the Foreign Office, a number of Intelligence Sections which have built up their own modern filing systems."

When the war ended, and with it the need for the various special intelligence agencies which had grown up like mushrooms in wartime London, the question arose of how the Foreign Office was to preserve these many supplementary channels of intelligence with which its secret files had been enriched. There was much talk of "stream-lining" the Foreign Office, of "democratizing" diplomacy, of breaking away from the old hidebound tradition. As concerns the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, however, all these fine words and noble intentions boiled down to the problem of how to organize a reliable intelligence service.

Much attention, too, was paid to the reorganization of the Foreign Office's information service on which falls the dual responsibility of providing information and guidance to the British press and radio, and of supplying information on current events to all other countries.

By the end of the war the importance of propaganda had been generally recognized. The

force of public opinion had become an important element in diplomacy. The British working class had taken an active interest in foreign policy since the time of the Spanish Civil War, when many looked on the struggle not from the strict view of England's national interests but as a conflict between fascism and democracy. We have seen how deep was the sympathy for the Soviet Union among the British workers during and after the war. To a Foreign Office which placed high on its list of postwar objectives the attenuation of this sympathy, lest solidarity between the workers of England and the U.S.S.R. should impede the government's working out of its plans, a department concerned with influencing public opinion became of high importance. And because the foreign policy of the Attlee-Bevin government was a policy against the interests of the masses, the Foreign Office information services were called on to deceive the public by distortion and suppression of the truth. The new intelligence organizations were destined to play the important part of providing grist for the mill of Attlee and Bevin.

The Foreign Office strained every effort to "correct" the high opinion of the Soviet Union which English people had formed during the war. With this aim it exercised all its influence on the BBC and the press, acting through all kinds of unofficial and semi-official advisers. British and American public opinion was sys-

tematically led astray by the various "popular" feature writers and authors of sensational articles who draw their material mainly from official English sources.

During all these years there had grown up an enormous interest in the Soviet Union among the mass of the people, and after the war the demand for serious books about the U.S.S.R. increased, but publishing houses did their best to feed the public with sensational "revelations" about life in the Soviet land. Disgruntled generals who had failed to make careers in military service during the war in Allied military missions in Moscow, dishonorable journalists scenting the postwar mood of those in power, bribed traitors, White émigrés and trotskyites, who had lain low during the war years—the list could be continued indefinitely of those who assured the public that they were solving the "Russian puzzle" for it, and who in fact were trying to undermine the authority which the Soviet Union had gained for itself throughout the world.

The first thing that I heard when I arrived in England in 1945 was a speech by a Labour M.P., Richard Stokes, who, presiding over a meeting of the Duchess of Atholl's "Free Europe" organization, called for the Red Army's "immediate withdrawal" from Europe behind the Soviet Union's 1939 frontiers. The BBC eagerly picked up and gave wide publicity to

stories of the most doubtful authenticity which served to discredit the Red Army.

The suppression and distortion of information about the Soviet Union are not the only methods used by the Foreign Office to build a wall between England and the U.S.S.R. With increasing frequency obstacles are raised before Soviet citizens invited as guests or delegates by British organizations.

Five months after the end of the war the government and most of the press met with a conspiracy of silence a Soviet delegation to the World Federation of Democratic Youth, which contained people distinguished in all fields of labour. Since then such an attitude has become the rule.

It was widely known in the British Embassy in Moscow that the Ambassador, Sir Maurice Peterson, used to bombard the Foreign Office with messages protesting against Russians receiving visas. Only a strong wave of public indignation prevented him from curtailing the stay in England of a group of Soviet women invited by English women's organizations in March 1949. At about the same time the British authorities tried to prevent a Soviet delegate from going to a conference of English schoolteachers. Yet these visitors from the Soviet Union travelled with but one aim, to strengthen Anglo-Soviet friendship.

We must, however, look more closely at the lives and activities of British diplomats in

Moscow, if we are to discover how unrepresentative of the British people's desire for peaceful and friendly relations with other peace-loving nations are the activities of Foreign Office diplomats abroad. For that we must return to the old mansion on the Sophiiskaya Embankment.

During the war, and for a few months after its end, the post of British Ambassador in Moscow was held by Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, who had succeeded Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942. It seemed to many that Clark Kerr was inclining too humbly to his American colleagues. Early in his long diplomatic career he had served as an attaché in Washington, and these years, spent in the close companionship of Walter Lippmann, later to become one of the leading publicists of the idea of Anglo-American world hegemony, and Felix Frankfurter, now a member of the Supreme Court of the U.S.A., were, Sir Archibald often remarked, the happiest of his life. He did not disguise his pro-American leanings. During the last year or two of his service in Moscow it was no secret among diplomats that he longed to be on the post of British Ambassador in the U.S.A. Clark Kerr's sympathies were most clearly revealed in his relations with George F. Kennan, at that time Minister-Counsellor at the American Embassy in Moscow under Harriman, and later to become one of the propagandists of the "cold war."

I first made the acquaintance of this American diplomat in Prague. Kennan was born in a well-to-do family and educated in a military academy, and when we met in Prague was already well advanced on a diplomatic career which in fifteen years had taken him from post to post in Switzerland, Germany, Riga and Moscow. Most of this time was considered by the State Department as special "Russian training." He had been given an intensive course in Russian language, literature, history and related subjects. He was one of the earliest members of a group of American diplomatists trained in the idea that eventually, when the isolationist tendencies of American public opinion had been changed, the United States would intervene in all aspects of international affairs.

In the beautiful peaceful garden of the U.S. Legation in Prague, Kennan presented himself as a "friend and admirer of the Russian people." He talked nostalgically of the glades and meadows around Moscow, of skating and tennis at the American Embassy datcha, of the "lovable Russian folk." In fact Kennan always looked on Russia as a country to be conquered and colonized by the Americans.

An almost morbid attraction to those sectors of European society where decay is most advanced is difficult to reconcile with what is in fact the dominant characteristic of Kennan's school of American diplomatists, a thrustful ruthlessness, ill-concealed behind a façade of

generosity. Coming to plunder Europe, they mouth platitudes about missions they have the duty to fulfill in the ancient Continent.

Kennan is a type of diplomat in whose interests it does not lie to see a Europe urgent with living forces. With contempt he declares that this Continent is inhabited by people misgoverned and listless, spiritually and physically tired, ripe to be led by the American middle class. He delights in the feverish colours of life in its dying, autumnal phase. Not for him the harshness of spring.

The long corridors of a medieval castle to be paced beside an old Count with thin blood and macabre tastes, endless conversations with ex-adjutants of Yudenich, such is the world in which Kennan feels comfortable. It is completely in character that he should have installed himself in America in a country-house built by a Ukrainian émigré as a replica of an old Russian mansion. Here, after a week's work on plans to extend United States military bases around the Soviet Union, he is able to indulge in dreams of living like a Russian landlord.

The declaration of "cold war" on the Soviet Union was made when the Soviet Army was still locked in fearful struggle with Hitler's forces. The Oder line was yet to be broken, Budapest still in German hands, the Ruhr not yet overrun by Eisenhower's troops. But a Soviet victory was certain and the State Department's representative Kennan was already en-

gaged on laying plans for a new war. Its victims were to be the masses of people in all the world. With icy-hearted ruthlessness this strategist of the "cold war" and propagandist of the U.S.A.'s anti-Soviet policy calculated that victory would find the Soviet people "physically and spiritually tired," disillusioned. In the pursuit of his ephemeral dreams Kennan informed his government that the Soviet people had lost its faith and devotion to the regime. The representative of a nation which owes its survival to the advanced skill of Soviet tankists and artillery men wrote scornfully about the new technical accomplishments of Soviet science, about "primitive peasants who had been taught something about the operation of machines." The man who had spent the solemn inspiring moments of victory in Moscow dared to refer to a "tired and dispirited population," to a Russia which "will remain economically a vulnerable, and in a certain sense an impotent, nation."

Of course, Kennan did not for one moment believe in what he was writing. That much I learned from him during a walk one day before the end of the war when we scrambled up the side streets near Taganka. Though he deliberately shut his eyes to all evidence of Soviet strength, seeking confirmation of his reports to the U.S.A. in the shabbiness of buildings and people worn out by the passage of war years, he was far too intelligent an observer to over-

look the tremendous reserves of strength and energy in the Soviet Union.

His intention was to mislead the American people, to help his masters in the State Department to encourage an aggressive spirit in the palsied and decrepit capitalist world; he believed that America could exercise "power of life or death" over the U.S.S.R., that it could "increase enormously the strains under which Soviet policy must operate, to force upon the Kremlin," etc., etc., as he wrote in the report that was to be published two years later in an American magazine, over the modest signature "X."

Kennan, in short, was the first and in some ways the most influential agent of America's warmongers. They should reward him with a monument in each of the hundreds of war bases that America maintains in all corners of the world.

It was before this man of violent hatred not only of the Soviet Union but of all democratic mankind, before this strategist of the criminal "cold war," that the British Ambassador in Moscow, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, bowed so humbly.

The growing subservience of the British Embassy to the United States Embassy was a process that went on right through the war. For Englishmen who believed that their country's chances of retaining its independence in world affairs depend, in the first place, on the

attitude adopted towards the U.S.A., the kowtowing of British diplomatists in Moscow to their American colleagues was a painful spectacle.

The relations between the two embassies were brought home to me sharply by an incident that occurred after I had reported to the newspapers I represented the indignation felt in Soviet circles at an unfounded accusation, made by the American Ambassador, Admiral Stanley, that the Soviet Government was deliberately concealing from its people the origin of American food supplied to the Soviet Union under lend-lease.

Sir Archibald Clark Kerr considered it necessary to write a letter of apology to the admiral on my behalf, informing me after he had sent it. Apparently the Americans were irapproachable.

"I am surprised you dare show yourself here," Sir Archibald commented when we met in the American Embassy somewhat later.

When Averell Harriman became U.S. Ambassador, the British Embassy's attitude of humble obedience became even more marked. It is true that there were strong rumours in the diplomatic corps that Clark Kerr, as the older and more experienced diplomatist, was far from happy about the secondary role he was instructed to play, but these were set at rest when, after returning from consultations with the British Government, he was seen to

be going out of his way to emphasize his respect for the American Ambassador.

British correspondents working in Moscow found their ambassador far less approachable than American journalists did. Further, there had at one time been a convention that provided them with access to Harriman's press conferences, in exchange for which the British Embassy's doors were always open to the Americans. After a short spell of these mutually satisfactory arrangements, however, the English correspondents found that they were not being admitted to the American Embassy, and on trying to have this injustice corrected, even if this meant threatening the Americans with the suspension of their privileges, were informed that "such steps would not be convenient."

Thus in the diplomatic corps the Americans took the lead, especially when, in the persons of George Kennan and Durbrow, they were represented by men who claimed to be experts on the Soviet Union. The Americans took over the part that had previously been held by the German diplomatists. Just as the soft-spoken millionaire Harriman—shipbuilding, aviation-industry, banking, and railroad magnate, once owner of concessions in the Chiaturi manganese mines in Georgia—a man with the face of a criminal who is paying blackmail to avoid the revelation of his crimes, cringing as if afraid of his neighbour—just as this Harriman

dominated the Scottish nobleman Clark Kerr, so in the Kennan-Roberts-Charpentier trio, the Englishman and the Frenchman had to play second strings to the American. From 1944 onwards, practically every diplomatic approach made to the Soviet Government was co-ordinated between the three embassies, with the American voice prevailing.

American diplomatists did not even bother to hide their anti-Soviet attitude. Many of them had quite openly expressed their hopes of seeing the German army reach Moscow. The American Embassy, incidentally, was the only one which had precise instructions what to do in case of a Russian defeat there. When, in October 1941, the diplomatic corps was given a few hours to assemble and leave Moscow for Kuibyshev, it turned out that the American Embassy had long ago had everything ready for the evacuation, to such a point that they had three cooks engaged and a vast amount of food ready. A part of the embassy staff which stayed behind in Moscow had instructions how to conduct themselves during the expected German occupation of the Soviet capital.

After the Japanese attack on the Pearl Harbor many American diplomatists lost all interest in the Russian front and brazenly expressed their hopes that supplies promised to Russia would now be sent to the Pacific. For them the only enemy were the Japanese. Those same American diplomatists and military men who

had hotly insisted that Soviet stories about German atrocities were inventions—"pure propaganda"—and the picture of the German invaders on Soviet posters "wildly exaggerated," were now shrieking about the "Japs" as "sub-human" people, who ought to be wiped off the face of the earth.

So satisfied were the Americans with Clark Kerr's handling of relations with the American Embassy that the influential group of American correspondents in Moscow began to agitate in favour of his becoming Britain's Ambassador in Washington. In the end Sir Archibald's dreams were fulfilled; he was made Britain's envoy to the U.S. at a time when the Labour Government was looking for someone suitable to represent a United Kingdom which had surrendered its independence.

In 1946, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr was followed by Sir Maurice Peterson, an old-style diplomatist, approaching, according to rumours, the end of his career when appointed to Moscow. If British journalists could, with justice, complain that Clark Kerr talked only to their American colleagues, of his successor it could be said that he scarcely talked at all. He was at least "impartial" in withholding his wisdom from all.

In diplomatic circles Peterson's three-year tenure of office in Moscow is likely to be remembered principally for the celebrated "So-

phiiskaya tea party." This is what happened at that "tea party."

One wintry afternoon towards the end of 1947 strollers on the Sophiiskaya Embankment of the Moskva River saw car after car drive into the courtyard of the British Embassy; the heads of practically every diplomatic mission in Moscow mounted the steps, crossed the dark panelled hall and entered the large gilded reception room of His Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary.

But this was no ordinary tea party. It was the time of the Soviet Union's monetary reform. Since the monetary reform the diplomatic corps had been seething with discontent. The return to open trading meant that diplomats no longer had the privilege of buying at a "closed" shop. They were now obliged—horribile dictu—to mix with the "natives." In the Soviet Government's bold measure to ameliorate the living conditions of 200 million people, they saw nothing except discomfort for themselves.

At a cocktail party given by the British Minister in connection with the monetary reform, an attempt was made by British, French and American diplomatists to persuade the doyen of the corps, the Chinese Ambassador Fu Bing-chang, to call a meeting to discuss the feasibility of a joint demarche to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Fu Bing-chang h'md. Fu Bing-chang haw'd. Fu Bing-chang

smiled. "Would it," he asked, "be quite proper for certain embassies—I mention no names, mark you—to associate themselves with such a protest? Had not certain embassies—again I mention no names, be careful to note—perhaps not carried out their obligation not to trade in depreciated rubles?"*

However, Fu Bing-chang's diplomatic talk was not good enough for the envoys of the Western Powers, and at the suggestion of the French and American chargés d'affaires, the British Ambassador called a meeting.

The diplomatists sat in a ring. One might have thought they were going to play blind-man's-buff, or some other innocent children's game, especially when into the very centre there waddled the ancient dog Brindle, boon companion of Sir Maurice Peterson. Brindle looked carefully at the assembled diplomatists, settled down comfortably and—went to sleep. Then the host read a draft protest, drawn up in terms more suitable for presentation to a native chief of a small tribe in a colonial land, than to the government of a great power. It was received in silence. Shades of Palmerston seemed to be present. One could almost imagine a British gunboat steaming up the Moskva River and anchoring between the British Embassy and the Great Kremlin Palace!

* It was a question of the illegal introduction into the Soviet Union by foreign diplomatists of counterfeit and German-issued Soviet paper money. (Author's note.)

"Milk, milk," cried the portly Turkish Ambassador Faik Akdur, to break the silence. "For three days my little ones have been without milk! You must put that into the protest."

At length somebody dared to call attention to some unpleasant details—about speculation by foreign diplomatists in the ruble—and . . . the tea party on the Sophiiskaya broke up in an atmosphere of unusual discomfort. The draft of a protest had not even been put to the vote.

Sir Maurice Peterson withdrew again into his shell after the fiasco of his attempt to organize the intervention of foreign powers into Soviet domestic matters. Only towards the end of his sojourn in Moscow did this phlegmatic ambassador show a certain liveliness. On the example of the American Government, which limited the number of visas to delegates to the New York Congress in Defence of Peace, Sir Maurice Peterson, as mentioned above, began to bombard the Foreign Office with telegrams demanding the refusal of visas to Soviet citizens invited to England by progressive organizations.

But let not the reader think that the phlegm of the British Ambassador has meant that the embassy has been inactive. There are, as I have already mentioned, two faces of the British Embassy: a face to look at and a face to look with. In general, all the routine work is carried out by the Ministers of the Embassy, who with their fellow-diplomatists execute the

policy of the Foreign Office and keep it constantly informed about all affairs in the Soviet Union, on the basis of the information supplied them by their agents and so-called "experts." That is why I wish to dwell on the activities of a man who played the role in the British Embassy of accumulator of all anti-Soviet tendencies and slanderous insinuations. I mean the present British Assistant High Commissioner in India, Frank Roberts.

From 1944 to 1947 Roberts was British Minister in Moscow and one of the leading personalities in the Soviet capital's diplomatic world. A small, neatly-dressed man with a bird-like alertness, a great capacity for work and an apparently insatiable thirst for information, Frank Roberts came to Moscow with the reputation of being a "coming man" in the Foreign Office. During the war, at a time when Britain was acting as America's broker in an attempt to secure the Portuguese Azores as an Atlantic base, he was sent to Lisbon, and had deftly pacified the wary and suspicious Salazar on an occasion when the impatience of American military circles looked like leading to a breakdown of the negotiations. In London and Washington there was complete satisfaction with Roberts' handling of the Lisbon mission.

Roberts' method of work was an amalgam of the old and the new schools of diplomacy. He was suave, an attentive listener, and when he shared the honours with his Arab wife,

highborn daughter of a former Egyptian Pasha, an excellent host. He used an assumed "objectivity" to attract interest and caught various ingenuous people on this hook. He was always smiling, always alert, always under control. Prudent and ambitious to the extreme, he was none the less capable of advancing audacious and bold-faced proofs of the "inevitability" of a collision with Russia. A highly efficient instrument of his masters' policy, his advancement has been rapid; Bevin had no less respect for him than Eden, and after his work in Moscow Roberts was appointed personal private secretary to Bevin and then promoted to the post of Assistant High Commissioner in India.

In English diplomatic circles, where Frank Roberts set the tone, all talk centred round the idea that it was necessary "to gain time" so that England should again become a great power capable of conducting an independent foreign policy. Roberts used to compare Britain's postwar position with that in which she had found herself after the loss of the American colonies in the 18th century. Britain, he would argue, should use her skill and experience in diplomacy to play for time, to keep the international situation fluid and unsettled. In other words, to prevent that stabilization which might have been achieved by an understanding between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.

In discussion and arguments such as these

the theory was born that Britain could only survive by exploiting tension between America and Russia and courting American "aid against Communist aggression," as the way of securing a flow of dollars into areas in which Britain's ruling class had strategic or economic interests.

It was Roberts who was largely responsible for the building up of the "Russian Secretariat," which was to supplement the Foreign Office secret files with intelligence of every character, political, economic, social and strategic. He tightened the organizational links between the British and U.S. Embassies in Moscow, starting a joint filing system devoted to the documentation of personalities in Soviet life. When it suited him he could be quite unconventional and unbend to receive information from officials of other embassies.

Roberts' evening parties were frequent and lavish, a demonstration of the assiduity with which he worked in establishing the "broadest possible contacts" with diplomatic society.

This is what used to go on at this kind of diplomatic cocktail party. Some fifty or sixty people standing close-packed for several hours in a room dense with cigarette-smoke. It is so noisy that you have to shout to make yourself heard. A careless move and you have knocked a glass of gin over a neighbour's uniform. George Hill, round as a barrel, a cigar in his mouth, between two lean and observant subal-

terns, buttonholes the first journalist he sees, asks if there are any Russians present and commands: "Bring them to me..." A Latin diplomatist appears in the door, a tall narrow-shouldered man with restless eyes. He reminds one of a hound trying to catch the scent of a hunted fox. It is the look you see on the face of foreigners in the Moscow commission-shops when they are in pursuit of bargains. His objective sighted, the diplomatist squeezes his way towards the group in which the American chargé d'affaires stands, coughs nervously, appears to shrink in size when his Yankee colleague punches him in the stomach, and listens, listens... Here are a pair of American newspapermen, with their boyish boastfulness, describing to an attentive British press attaché their latest pranks with the Press Department. Glassy-eyed, in the grips of a black melancholy, snatching at the drinks as they are handed about by servants, an officer from the British naval mission in Archangel is calculating what price he dare ask for the suitcase of rubles he keeps under his hotel bed. People drink as if they had been thirsty for a week. In one corner the army is talking ballet. They are the lovers of the choreographic art always to be seen isolated from the public on the steps of the Bolshoi Theatre entrance hall. The "second front" people called them in 1942.

In a corner, slightly in the shade, stand the half dozen or so guests who are here on serious

business, an assistant military attaché assigned to Moscow to report on the situation in the Soviet Union to the War Office; beside him a choleric young secretary of the British Embassy whose special task is to "co-ordinate British and American diplomatic activities" and who is at the moment on the lookout for a U.S. courier who was held up by bad weather in Baku and probably has something to say; a journalist, with the reputation of telling the best anti-Soviet jokes in Moscow; a "Russian expert" who has learned only half a dozen words of Russian in twelve years, and still calls the Russians the "natives"; a sour-faced student of Russian history who conceives his duty to be to disbelieve anything written in the Soviet press, and to believe anything he overhears in the tram-car....

Now and again they plunge into the mob, and emerge covered with cigarette ash and drink-stains with somebody in tow, seek a quiet corner and talk in undertones.

The Russian guests have left now. The ambassadors have gone on to dinner parties. There is a relaxation of tension. Now one can curse the Russians openly. The man from Archangel is being sick in the lavatory. There is scuffling in the bedroom. People settle down to look at copies of "Life" and "Esquire." The Americans go for the whiskey bottle in earnest. Someone rings up...

These are the people who spend their time

prowling around kolkhoz markets and railway stations, factories and aerodromes, getting into conversation with Russians in the parks to gather material for their reports and to gain the praise of their bosses and perhaps even promotion. In search of information, they read the letters sent home by diplomatic mail by embassy employees and soldiers in the military mission, and to their desks comes every scrap of knowledge about Soviet life picked up from servants, shop assistants and casual encounters.

When I recall the talks I had with Roberts at these parties I can clearly see that one line to which he clung and which he advocated in conversation with everyone in whom he was in one way or another interested. This line had its origin in the American Embassy and was intended to prompt the idea of "inevitability of war with the Soviet Union."

The ideological explanation of "inevitability" of war to which Roberts and his successor to the post of British Minister, Geoffrey Harrison, subscribed, finally appeared in the pages of the American journal "Foreign Affairs," which is known to reflect the views of the American State Department. The article was signed "Historicus," the pseudonym of the present first secretary of U.S. Embassy, Morgan.

This article was a shameless falsification of the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Stalin regarding the question of war.

So, in the days when people throughout the world were fully striving for a firm and lasting peace, a leading British diplomat in Moscow was preaching the inevitability of an armed clash between the socialist and capitalist systems.

Roberts was echoing what he heard in the American Embassy. Before he left Moscow the former American Ambassador, Bedell Smith, was expressing to representatives of the smaller powers—in particular of the Arab countries—that in his opinion agreement between the U.S.S.R. and America could never be reached. This was a form of undisguised intimidation of his "minor colleagues," of the same nature as that unsuccessfully used by the State Department's Hugh Cumming against the Swedes, when the U.S.A. was trying to force them to sign the Atlantic pact.

Naturally, the American warmongers used the theory of inevitability of war to justify the unprecedentedly gigantic rearming of their country, the halt of the denazification of Germany, the remilitarization of Japan, the building of American military bases on foreign soil and the transformation of U.S.A. into a militarized police state. By preaching the "inevitability" of war British and American diplomats are drawing the small powers into their reactionary camp.

The war hysteria which, with Roberts' help, the Americans excited in the Moscow diplomat-

ic corps turned in the end into what was virtually a tragicomic farce.

Woken one April night by the sound of tanks passing his place of residence on their way to a rehearsal of the May Day parade, a secretary of the Brazilian Embassy rushed off to telegraph his government that powerful armoured forces were moving through the Soviet capital heading westward.

A Belgian military attaché, suspecting that some lethal object was concealed in his room, tore down the bathroom fittings in a state of complete nervous collapse.

As a typical representative of English middle-class diplomacy, Roberts feared the emerging strength of the Soviet Union in the post-war period, and consistently sought to minimize Soviet successes in the eyes of the British people. This was particularly the case over the Soviet five-year plan, which he used all kinds of widely circulated fabrications to interpret as nothing less than a rearmament plan. This view was later faithfully reflected in those organs of the press most closely in touch with the Foreign Office.

In the winter of 1946-47, an American-inspired theory that the 1946 drought made inevitable a grave economic crisis in the Soviet Union went the rounds of the diplomatic corps, and was used to hinder normal commercial relations of more than one country with the U.S.S.R.

The influencing of British public opinion with the aim of misrepresenting or concealing the truth about the Soviet Union was one of the principal tasks of British diplomatists in Moscow. Roberts proved himself to be adept at this. He would probe for "weak spots" in Soviet life, using self-critical articles in the Soviet press as "evidence." He insisted on detailed reports of all they had seen or heard from embassy employees spending their holidays in the Soviet Union. And if anything discreditable to the Soviet regime could be found, you could be sure that through the News Department of the Foreign Office it would find its way into the press. Often he set special tasks. Thus his "experts" were instructed to examine the Transcaucasian and Central Asian press for evidence of abuse of the Kolkhoz Statute, or to seek for examples of vestiges of nationalism in the Western Ukraine.

Who are these "experts on Soviet affairs," and what do they do?

The principal organization of experts is the "Russian Secretariat" of the British Foreign Office, formed while the war was still in progress. Soon after the end of the war a young British diplomatist, Adam Watson, who had no little to do in co-ordinating the information on the Soviet Union in the files of the British and United States embassies, told me that the "Russian Secretariat" was meant to educate cadres of young specialists on the Soviet Union

and the Slav countries similar to those of the State Department.

The "Russian" or "Slav Secretariat," he told me, was already represented in Moscow, in most of the East-European capitals, as well as in Helsinki and Southern Korea, by specialists released from routine embassy duties and free to amass, collate and write up material concerning all aspects of life in their respective countries.

Naturally the questions arise, what kind of people are engaged in collecting this information and what are their motives for doing so?

For the staff of the "Russian Secretariat" the Foreign Office selected people who could in no way be considered to reflect the postwar mood of the British people, which was marked by a desire to co-operate in a friendly spirit with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe.

Only a few months had passed after the conclusion of peace, before it became clear that the Labour Government required its new intelligence organization to supply material which could be used to discredit the Soviet Union and all the progressive forces in Europe, and, as well, for the campaign against the British working class.

To Warsaw, for instance, was sent Michael Winch, bosom friend of Poland's effete aristocracy, a languid sybarite, and typical representative of British intellectual dilettantism. The

Budapest representative, a certain Redward, was notorious in journalistic circles before the war for his wholehearted sympathy for the most reactionary groups in Hungary's political life. He was known to have served on the gun-boat under the command of Admiral Troubridge, who had given active support to Horthy's counter-revolutionary forces in 1919.

In Moscow, the "Russian Secretariat" passed under the control of George Bolsover, who had spent most of the war on the staff of the British Embassy. Bolsover came to the Soviet Union with the reputation of being a historian. Introducing himself, he always insisted that he was "not really a diplomat, but a historian in temporary diplomatic service." However, he himself told me how his students at Manchester, whom he taught English history, had once challenged his authority when he criticized the Soviet Union. But I never noticed that Bolsover was interested in correcting the false picture of Soviet Russia that had for so long been thrust at English students. As an example, there was the report on Soviet education he spent months in "preparing."

This report consisted of examples specially selected to discredit the Soviet system of national education and to conceal the successes and benefits of a system acknowledged by even the severest foreign critics of the Soviet regime. In this as in other work of the "Russian

Secretariat" the guiding motive was to probe for "weak spots." The approach was not that of objective research, but of fulfilling the counter-propaganda assignment of the Foreign Office.

And thus anyone who was genuinely interested in the improvement of Anglo-Soviet relations could not but look with suspicion on Bolsover's attempts to get into touch with Soviet historians and journalists interested in foreign affairs.

Some of the other diplomatists working for the "Russian Secretariat" belonged directly to its staff, others merely provided it with information.

David Floyd, who was co-opted by the "Russian Secretariat" after the war, had worked previously in Moscow as a member of the British Military Mission; George Grahame, who in his post in the Press Department was particularly concerned with Russian reactions to the BBC programmes in the Russian language, had served during the war as an officer attached to George Hill's intelligence mission. Floyd always made himself out to be "on the left" in politics. From Moscow he was transferred to Prague in 1947, and later to Belgrade. As far as I hear, the Czechoslovak authorities had no reason to consider him as a person of "pro-Soviet orientation."

Another member of the British Embassy staff who is also worth recalling was Miss Brenda

Tripp, who used to describe herself as "half a scientist." What the other half was is not clear. She had, it seemed, been sent to Russia by the British Council, an organization for cultural and educational relations with foreign lands which is officially held to be independent of the Foreign Office. She was, however, never accepted as such by the Soviet authorities and a niche was found for her in the Press Department of the embassy. She had exquisite manners, and a rather feline grace. Her duties, it seemed, consisted in establishing as many contacts as possible with Soviet scientists and in arranging direct exchange of scientific papers between English and Soviet scientific circles. But her enquiries into the private lives and political views of those Soviet citizens she met, and her very special interest in those who had ever visited or were likely to visit England, were rather more searching than one expects from a diplomat, or even from "half a diplomat."

When a group of British scientists visited the Soviet Union in 1945 to attend the jubilee of the Academy of Sciences, its members reasonably decided to turn down her pressing suggestion that she should act as their secretary-interpreter.

All the activities of the "Russian Secretariat" were highly coloured by its anti-Soviet imagination and by its perpetual concern with Russia's defences.

All Soviet citizens whom the British Embassy consider to be of "pro-British" orientation are classified, put on special lists and are considered subjects worthy of special attention. This work, incidentally, is not the monopoly of the "Russian Secretariat," but is a routine activity of the embassy and is given the most serious attention.

Shortly before he left, Robert Dunbar, for two years after the war British press attaché and publisher of "Britanski Soyuznik," is known to have sought the help of a Soviet citizen in making long lists of names of Soviet citizens with comments on their known political views and attitude towards Soviet power, as well as on their "accessibility."

Because of the monolithic character of Soviet society and the vigilant and patriotic character of its people, those foreign diplomats who have specialized in looking for the "weak links" have found their work in Moscow confined to a tiny fraction of the population. The assiduousness with which embassy employees look for these "weak links" can be compared only with the way that a hungry fox sniffs at every hole hoping to find a gaping field mouse. Whenever a grumble or a complaint is heard, it is an occasion for jubilation in the British Embassy, and the Soviet citizen who talks on any subject to a foreigner encountered casually in a trolley bus or on a seat in the park, may be sure that the conversation

is reported in great detail to the ambassador and probably sent out of the country by the next diplomatic courier.

Generally, however, these diplomatic soundings are met with rebuffs of the type administered by a young Soviet writer in my presence one day. Pressed for a reason for declining an invitation to have a "heart-to-heart" talk, he replied: "If you really insist on having a reason it's because I find your company insufferably boring. I learn nothing new from you about your country's culture. Your friends are, it seems, completely without a sense of humour or cultivated tastes. My stomach cannot retain your canned food, and I prefer 'Kazbek' to 'Lucky Strike' cigarettes, they are stronger. I find it difficult to stay in the same room with people who put their feet on the table, or to look a man in the face when he is chewing gum. I resent being told by young foreign diplomatists who don't even read 'Pravda' or 'Bolshevik' that the 'Revolution is dead,' because they have heard that the Metropolitan of Moscow sent greetings to Stalin on November 7. I cannot answer their questions about the price of butter in Krasnodar or living conditions in Chelyabinsk. And besides I dislike people who, when I'm talking, make notes on little bits of paper."

What use is made of the information so laboriously gathered and searched for by the British Embassy?

At the present time the diplomatic correspondents who are in daily contact with the Foreign Office have a virtual monopoly of information about the Soviet Union in England. It follows that the picture of Soviet life which is being given to the English people in the post-war years is drawn by the Foreign Office, and the colouring has been far from chosen to help the establishment of even normal relations between Britain and the U.S.S.R.

Let us take an example. When, for instance, the Communist Party and the Soviet Government called for the strict observance of the Kolkhoz Statute and administrative action was taken to protect the interests of the collective farmers, most of the British newspapers, acting under guidance of the Foreign Office, published widely inaccurate and sensational stories of a "mass purge in Soviet collective farms."

But the most striking example of the deception of public opinion in their own land by British officials was provided by the way the abolition of rationing in the Soviet Union was commented on. The Soviet authorities' important measure came at a most awkward time for Britain's Labour Government. In the third year of peace, the British people's rations of food and manufactured goods were no better, and in some categories rather worse, than during the war, while quality was falling. Nor were prospects of improvement good. But the English Government was able to point to the

rest of Europe and to argue that elsewhere, too, times were hard.

It is easy therefore to imagine how warm a welcome the British Foreign Office gave to a report from its embassy in Moscow which not only "forecast" that within six or eight months Moscow's shops would in all probability be empty, but stated that kolkhoz-market prices had risen as the result of the abolition of rationing and that "hidden forms of rationing of retail goods" had been introduced which cancelled out the benefits provided by the abolition of rationing.

This report, with the cachet of the British Embassy, was passed on to the "Daily Telegraph" and printed over the name of the paper's diplomatic correspondent. It was widely used by the European and home services of the BBC, and proved so effective in deceiving public opinion that over six months later little was known in England about the end of rationing in the Soviet Union or about the abundance of food in the country.

Another contribution by the Foreign Office to the campaign of mystification and deception was the totally false picture presented to the British people of Soviet living standards in the postwar period. Within a few months of the abolition of rationing and the currency reform in the Soviet Union, figures were made available to the British press, deriving it seems from the U.S. Embassy's economic depart-

ment, which purported to explain how many hours Soviet workers in various categories of labour had to spend at work in order to feed themselves at current prices. These figures were presented in the press in comparison with statistics applying to Britain in such a way as to give the impression that the English worker's standard of living was immeasurably higher than in the U.S.S.R. Widespread use was made of these "statistics" by propaganda agencies, especially in the Middle East and in Scandinavia, though they were chiefly intended to discredit the Soviet Union among England's own masses.

But the false nature of the "statistics" deriving from the Foreign Office was quite obvious. Soviet prices are reckoned in postwar figures, but wages on the prewar level, leaving out of account the substantial increases in wages since 1940. Besides, the fact is "overlooked" that the English worker has to pay up to one-third of his wages on rent and that direct taxation takes annually an average industrial worker's about six weeks' earnings, besides which he pays many indirect taxes. Add to that the constant menace of unemployment and it will be clear that the statistics of the Foreign Office are as different from the truth about English life as black is from white.

In their campaign of anti-Soviet propaganda the British authorities have had no few helpers. In spring 1949, workers in some Lancashire and

Yorkshire industrial enterprises often found leaflets inserted in their pay-packets. These leaflets, purporting to describe the "horrors" of life in the Soviet Union, bore the imprint of the Economic League, an organization heavily subsidized by a large number of the wealthiest capitalists and existing to oppose the socialist movement of the working class.

To gain a clearer idea of the way the Economic League opposes the interests of the people, let it be recalled that an original member of the League is Lord McGowan, chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries Limited, the largest industrial undertaking in the British Empire, operating 80 factories and employing some 80,000 men and women. Lord McGowan, who came into the chemical industry through the Nobel explosives concern, was before the war a member of the Anglo-German Fellowship, notorious for organizing visits by Nazi propagandists to Britain. He was one of those entertained by Hitler at the Nuremberg "rally" and his business relations included an agreement with the German chemical monopolists who were preparing the war. It is therefore hardly surprising to find that the Economic League he sponsors should today be concentrating the venom of its attacks on the country where Socialism is a reality.

The texts of the League's leaflets, which are being distributed in prodigious numbers by employers, show clear signs of having been

drawn up with the assistance of material provided by the Foreign Office.

How, it may be asked, can there be talk of mutual understanding in the light of the policy which the British Government is conducting towards the Soviet Union? I have grown more and more convinced that the sooner English workers realize that the false picture of life in the Soviet Union that they are being given by their rulers is a part of reaction's campaign against not only the U.S.S.R., but the interests of English workers, and the sooner they realize that this campaign is intended to bemuse and bewilder the workers, to make them accept hardships with complacency or to weaken their will to struggle for better living conditions, the sooner will come the day when English workers will be able to defend their interests against the infringements upon their rights by what calls itself a "labour government."

The anti-Soviet position of British and American diplomatists is reflected clearly in the behaviour of the diplomatists of other countries who are obedient to them. When, for instance, Sir Maurice Peterson failed to appear at the railway station to meet the premiers of East-European countries on official visits to Moscow, his breach of local diplomatic etiquette would be a subject of anxious discussion among diplomatic representatives of Arab or West-European lands. Had they not, perhaps, made a "mistake" by not following the

British lead? The tone of diplomatic behaviour is to a considerable extent set by the representatives of Great Powers, whose every move is carefully watched by their less important colleagues.

Thus a certain responsibility rests on the British and American embassies for a number of incidents involving diplomats accredited to Moscow.

In 1946, one of the secretaries of the Brazilian Embassy, Pinha Soares, was requested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R. to leave the country as a result of an incident which he had provoked in the Hotel National. The account of the incident published in a Moscow newspaper was restrained, but the facts of the case were known to all foreigners in Moscow.

Pinha Soares had the unenviable reputation of a bon viveur and a heavy drinker. He had already been informed by the management of the Hotel National, where he lodged, that his practice of tossing empty bottles through the window on to the pavement of Gorki Street was not looked on particularly favourably by pedestrians passing by or by the militia.

One evening, this Latin-American diplomat, already intoxicated, entered the Café National in search of something more to drink. All the seats were occupied but he found one empty chair on the orchestra platform and attempted to install himself on it. He was politely but

firmly informed by the management of the café that it was not customary in Moscow for guests to behave in such a way. To this he replied that local customs "meant nothing to Pinha Soares, a Brazilian diplomat, enjoying diplomatic immunity in the U.S.S.R." And to emphasize his rights he delivered a powerful blow at the café manager.

This was more than the public present could stand and with their help the violently struggling diplomat was conducted to his rooms. Undaunted, however, he re-emerged, descended to the hotel hall, and began to smash the furniture, delivering a speech in which he rained insults on the Soviet Union.

Needless to say, Senhor Soares was received like a "hero" returning from the wars when he reached Rio de Janeiro. There, no doubt, he continued at leisure the "speech" that the Soviet authorities had thought it proper to curtail in Moscow.

The way in which the activities of other embassies in Moscow were subjected to the anti-Soviet policy of the British and Americans may be seen from the following.

There was a time when the old Roman Catholic Church of St. Louis was placed at the disposal of the French Embassy. Although most of the congregation of believers were Soviet citizens, the priests of this church have been exclusively foreign, French or American, and have, moreover, belonged to the Vatican's

group of "Russian specialists" more or less connected with the Jesuit order. Among the first priests sent there under cover of the French Embassy one finds the names of Monsignor Neveu and Monsignor Tisserant, who later gained a certain notoriety as directors of the "oriental" department of the Vatican intelligence service. The former French diplomat, Jean Cathala, relates how one day he suggested to Charpentier, at that time French Counsellor in Moscow, the replacement of the American-born Father Brown, whose sympathy for the Germans during the battle for Moscow had made him notorious.

"My dear friend, don't think about it!" was the reply. "We would have to get Rome's permission."

In other words, the priest of St. Louis was a clandestine Vatican agent, introduced into the Soviet Union under the cover of the French Embassy, and serving the interests of the Vatican state, whose attitude towards the Soviet Union is well known.

When, in 1943, I called on Father Brown he made no secret of the fact that he considered himself as the apostolic delegate of the Holy See in the U.S.S.R. Father Brown (who left the Soviet Union under a cloud, following an incident in which, under the influence of drink, he had struck his servant) was succeeded by another American, a Father Laberge, assisted by the French Father Thomas who had previ-

ously worked in Yugoslavia. Both of these priests were most popular in Western diplomatic circles, where they were well known for their strong advocacy of the "American way of life." Father Thomas, for example, took the unprecedented course of delivering a sermon to the French colony assembled at their embassy to celebrate New Year's Day, 1949, in which he condemned the "fomenters of strikes" in France, and called for God's blessing on the Marshall plan representative David Bruce.

An idea of the connections of the Vatican's agents in the U.S.S.R. with the dark forces of reaction may be learned from the following incident.

After the liberation of Odessa, the French Mission in Moscow, under Roger Garreau, received a communication from a French-born priest claiming the Ambassador's protection. Enquiries resulted in it coming to light that he was one of those Jesuit chaplains who had been attached to the German forces of occupation in Eastern Europe under the terms of an agreement between the Vatican and Ribbentrop in 1941. The priest held a Vichy passport liberally stamped by the Wehrmacht. Garreau consulted Father Brown, who at once replied that he was well acquainted with the priest in question, that they had studied together and belonged to the same order. Enough to show how a Nazi agent could re-

ceive support from the French Embassy in Moscow.

At the root of the Brazilian diplomatist scandal I have described, as of the behaviour in general of the British and American diplomatists in Russia, there lies the reactionary theory of their "superiority."

These diplomatic representatives consider themselves to be the spokesmen of a culture that is higher than the culture of the Soviet Workers' State, in the same way that in their own lands they consider their class to be "higher" than their own working class. Soviet citizens have ample opportunity to judge for themselves of the cynical lack of morality of these representatives of culture. It is enough to remember the speculation of many foreign diplomatists in Soviet currency.

During their occupation of Soviet territory the Germans printed and put into circulation counterfeit money, of which, in one way or another, much fell into the hands of diplomatic couriers working on the Moscow run.

Contrary to the "gentlemen's agreement" between the diplomatic corps and the Soviet authorities, according to which diplomats, who have special privileges in changing currency, pledged themselves to curtail the purchase of false rubles, contraband rubles continued to be brought in and converted into valuable photographic equipment, furs, and antiques or spent on extravagant orgies. Some of these

diplomatic speculators were thus able to live at a rate three or four times above their lawfully earned income.

Much light was thrown on to these shady practices by the Soviet monetary reform of 1947. As rumour grew that a reform was impending the leading lights in the diplomatic black market scrambled to turn their paper into property. One saw diplomatists staggering up Stoleshnikov Lane loaded with heavy silver candelabra, cases of cutlery, or collectors' pieces of porcelain. The Chinese Ambassador invested in vodka. He is said to have spent 100,000 rubles on this venture. The corridors of the Hotel National for once lost their sober hush. One might have been in the couloirs of a stock exchange. Overnight the incomes of some diplomatists were reduced by 80 per cent. Christmas that year for many lacked its usual spirit of festivity.

This grasping spirit which pervaded the diplomatic corps was less pardonable because it existed in a country where diplomatists are accorded every sort of privilege. Compared with living conditions in other European countries, the diplomatists in Russia, it may be said, live sumptuously. During the rationing period, they had petrol for their cars, they had datchas in summer, they lived in capacious lodgings, enjoyed privileges in travel and in spending their leisure. A special diplomatic rate was fixed for the ruble more favourable than the official rate.

Yet, far from being grateful for this effort on their behalf, many foreigners in Moscow complain incessantly about their living conditions, a habit in striking contrast to their practice of sending home parcels of butter, bacon, confectionery and canned goods. During the war the diplomatists bombarded the organization that attended to their needs with most unreasonable demands, and, moreover, assessed the Soviet Union's chances of victory according to the way their demands were satisfied or not.

"If the Russians," a diplomat said to me one day, "are not capable of repairing my car, I don't see how they can expect to beat the Germans." It reminded me of an American journalist's comment on experiencing difficulties in travelling from Archangel to Kuibyshev. "These people are not going to win the war. If they can't get me to Kuibyshev in less than a week, how are they going to get their armies from Siberia to Moscow?"

A striking example of the degradation of the "culture" of Western diplomatists was provided by an anti-Soviet party which was held in the Canadian Embassy in April 1948. This party, the equal of which for lack of taste and principle it would be difficult to find, was described as "a beggars' party" and was meant to commemorate the Soviet monetary reform. The role of chief buffoon at the party was played by Phillips, a secretary of the Canadian Embassy,

and the rest—mainly members of the staffs of the American, British and Dominions embassies—did their best to match his slanders on the Soviet people.

It might interest the women of Soviet collective farms to know that Mrs. Hulton, the wife of an assistant British military attaché (or perhaps it was Mrs. Morris, the wife of the first secretary in the American Embassy), impersonated a "Soviet collective farmer" by dressing herself up in a long ragged skirt and a dirty shawl in which she went with outstretched hand begging for alms. . . . Such was the way in which foreign diplomatists, gathered in the Canadian Embassy, ridiculed the people in the land in which they lived and whose hospitality they fully enjoy.

In their arrogance, such foreign diplomats assume that the "local inhabitants" could have no other attitude but one of admiration for such a "way of living" and when, as sometimes happens, they are disabused of this belief, they are quite bewildered or more often infuriated. These people cannot understand that the average Soviet citizen has a keener thirst for education and a greater respect for cultural values than some of them have. They are unable to appreciate how strongly developed in a Soviet citizen is the sense of human dignity and respect for other peoples. At their interminable round of cocktail parties, bridge parties, dances and receptions, official and unofficial,

the idlers among the diplomatists exchange stale anti-Soviet jokes and circulate ill-founded rumours.

In their company, the most remarkable things are to be heard, the source of which has always to be looked for in some desire to ridicule Soviet people. "The Russians do not smile, they either laugh or weep." Mrs. Kohler of the U.S. Embassy explains, and goes on to try and prove that the reason for the "weakness" of the voices in the Bolshoi Theatre opera company is that the singers are not paid in dollars. "Do you like Pushkin?" the wife of a very distinguished ambassador was once asked. "What is it?" she asked wide-eyed, "It sounds fascinating." This society is a hotbed of anti-Soviet rumours, too absurd or too slanderous to be worth repeating here, but which, nonetheless, often find their way into the columns of "Time" magazine or "Newsweek," or the pages of leading English newspapers.

Anyone who expresses his admiration for a Soviet achievement, or who shows any sympathy for the measures of the Soviet Government to raise the cultural and material standards of life in the land, not only draws on himself the ironical comment, "he is pro-Soviet," but risks harming his future career. I have known instances when foreign diplomatists, whose names it would be better not to mention, since it would only harm their careers, have been virtually ostracized because they

have not permitted themselves to adopt the fashionable tone of mockery aimed at everything Soviet.

The charge of being "pro-Soviet" is perhaps the most deadly that can be brought by his superiors against a member of the British Embassy in Moscow, whereas anyone who can produce a report which fits in with the British Government's requirements is likely to be well rewarded. From Moscow, the "Russian Secretariat's" George Bolsover advanced to the important post of Director of the London School of Slavonic Studies, Frank Roberts was made one of Bevin's closest collaborators. Promotion is rapid in the anti-Soviet army, and no ambitious diplomatist is likely to neglect his opportunities.

The world once before trod the path to catastrophe in frantic hatred of the Soviet Union and a savage refusal to recognize the vast social transformation that has taken place and continues to take place in the Soviet Union. Now the enemies of peace are again dragging the world along that path. Again the hoax that the Soviet Union is preparing war is being foisted on the public. We have seen how the principle of "continuity" in British foreign policy and the retention in power in the Foreign Office of those men who led Europe to Munich are helping to mislead British public opinion about the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union's policy.

The British people do not wish to be driven into another war. I know that the people of my country do not wish to become dependent on American monopolists. For the British people there is only one way to peace and independence, the way of economic, cultural and political co-operation with the Soviet Union and the countries of People's Democracy, along with all other lands in the world. And the British people have the right to demand that their diplomatic representatives should put into practice a policy which would reflect their true desires, a policy of co-operation and mutual understanding with the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER X

FOR PEACE—AGAINST WAR

The more I have seen of British diplomats, the clearer I have recognized in them the representatives of the class in which I myself was born and bred, the products of those houses with respectable façades and velvet curtains behind which filth and depravity lie concealed from the stranger's eyes.

Blinded with hatred of the Soviet Union, they are incapable of seeing and appreciating the gigantic strength with which the Soviet people, after their victory in violent battle with fascism, have now turned to peaceful construction.

Yet were they to cross the threshold of the British Embassy and go out into the streets of Moscow, and look at the Soviet people not with unfriendly but with objective eyes, each of them would discover that new world in which the people of the Soviet Union is living.

I have spent eight years in the Soviet Union and I have caught glimpses of that world, of a

people whose way lies clear before them. They are people fighting for peace, inspired by an unshakeable confidence in the future. In their company I have experienced the same feeling of liberation that I felt when, as a child in the cottage of the Coopers, I listened to the songs of struggle of the Lancashire weavers.

The war years showed me that the Soviet people could not only outlast difficulties without losing heart, but win brilliant successes in the struggle for the independence of their land. And now I see that they can work in peacetime just as heroically as they fought in war.

The fulfillment of the grandiose programme of restoring the national economy of the Soviet Union has required the same qualities as the conduct of war; perseverance, a leaping optimism, and a lofty devotion to principle.

A few months after the end of the war I visited a Ukrainian village. Demobilized warriors of Stalingrad were arriving from Berlin in trucks scrawled with the words "We Conquered." Now they were working in the fields. They were the same kind of men I had met in Stalingrad, as grimly determined as they worked as when they fought, as carefree after toil as after battle.

I visited a rest home for workers near Smolensk. There was the same atmosphere of quiet pride after victory. An electric-power station that had been destroyed by the Germans had been repaired, and light flowed from it to the

rest home and to scores of collective farms which, too, had lain in ruins. The radio announced an award of decorations to its workers, some of whom were present.

When I came to Leningrad the first thing I saw was a team of girls shifting masonry and rubble from the ruins of a stone house. In those days many thousands of girls were working in this way, as volunteers who had offered to clear debris from the streets and to lay out gardens for the children in place of ruins. They came after a day's work, or in the early morning or on their weekly day off. I found them working in good humour, singing quietly to themselves and joking with their neighbours. Passers-by frequently joined in. "Who is in charge?" I asked a woman with a small hat who was piling bricks. "Nobody," she replied, "we are in charge of ourselves." Beside her lay a heap of shopping baskets, brief cases, students' textbooks and other objects laid aside by the volunteers.

Some time later the youth in the district of Moscow where I live organized the clearing up and planting of trees and shrubs in the local park. In the course of a few autumn days they transformed the entire district. And in those days I remembered the team of Leningrad girls.

Living in the Soviet Union has shown me what a splendid future lies ahead for a society where mankind's efforts are directed to the

end of achieving social, political and economic equality of opportunity for all.

Whenever I return from visits to the former backward areas of the Soviet Union, I find myself drawing comparisons between the living conditions of the Soviet population and those in which the people of the British colonial empire live. On the one hand the shabby shacks of the native compounds, filth, disease, a lack even of elementary schools, and, naturally, a complete absence of those institutes where the local population might acquire qualifications and challenge the white man's monopoly in this field. On the other hand, here, in the Soviet Union, new towns and workers' settlements with attractive modern houses, schools—not only the usual seven- and ten-year schools, but technical schools, institutes, courses for adults—libraries, clubs, and every provision for the cultured employment of leisure.

One of the signs that indicate how man is being transformed is the new attitude towards property. The attitude of the rank-and-file Soviet citizen towards personal property cannot fail to capture the attention of the visitor from bourgeois lands.

In Russia I have found people who are anxious to earn more in order to clothe themselves better, to visit the theatre more frequently or buy books, to learn to play musical instruments or to speak foreign languages, and so on. I have never, however, encountered the

slightest desire on the part of worker or farmer to acquire the means of production, in other words, of capital.

Few foreigners who have visited the Soviet Union can have failed to notice how often the word "our" is used there in connotations fulfilled in other lands, more often than not, by the word "their." And this little word "our" has an enormous social significance.

An English trade unionist who visited the young Soviet state as early as 1920, told how during a visit to a coal mine he mentioned to one of the workers that the pit had been taken over by the U.S.S.R. in very poor technical shape. "That may be, but it's ours," the miner replied. Some twenty-five years later, in Stalino in the Donbas, I heard an excellent performance of the opera "The Barber of Seville." As we left the handsome opera house on the broad asphalted main street, I thanked the engineer who accompanied us and expressed my admiration for the theatre. "Yes," the engineer replied, "it's a fine theatre, and a fine thing that it's ours."

When we arrived in Vyazma soon after its liberation the streets were still blocked with ruined buildings. As we picked our way with difficulty through the debris the people of Vyazma who accompanied us told how it had looked before. They spoke only of "our club," "our bridges," "our schools," "our railway station," "our factories." And I heard this word

spoken with pride on the banks of the Dnieper by the peasants of the collective farm "Partisan," when they pointed to the three kilometres' length of avenue where newly planted poplars and ash lined the road from "our" collective farm towards Kiev.

In peacetime there has been generated throughout Soviet society a creative attitude towards labour, comparable with the strength with which the people defended their country. I believe this massive dynamic effort deserves the name of patriotic no less than the struggle of the Russians with Hitler Germany. Because in each case the struggle has been one of Soviet people fighting to defend their social structure.

The continuous discussion, spreading throughout the population, of state plans and programmes, unites the whole Soviet people in a constructive effort, creates a feeling of association and infuses a sense of loyalty to the collective.

The working masses of the Soviet land, moving in broad columns on May Day through the Red Square, decked in crimson and gold, have the right to regard the Soviet Union as the only country where full equality of men has been achieved. And as in serried ranks, with red banners tossing in a palpitating vision of strength, the columns stream past Lenin's Mausoleum and ovations ring out, every citizen of the Soviet Union is conscious of the fact that

he, the worker, is honoured as the most precious thing in the land, since he holds in his hands the key of humanity's advance.

How different a reception awaited those columns of London workers who went to the centre of their capital city last May Day to be beaten and arrested by mounted policemen when they raised their banners in defence of peace!

The Soviet Union carries in itself the dreams of progressive mankind, and in this sense it is international. Vigilant in the defence of its own achievements, the Soviet Union faces the world in generous spirit, sharing its experience with all people who wish to learn from it. I had been brought up to regard Soviet internationalism as a dark conspiracy. I have found it to be the light, ever growing brighter, that glows from a beacon.

In the Soviet Union of the postwar period I have seen how warmly the people respond to their government's peaceful policy. The Soviet leaders have laid all their cards on the table. Both the programme and the record of the government's activities are public knowledge in a land where a keener interest in international affairs is taken than in any other country of the world.

Every open-minded foreigner visiting Moscow must sense and be enheartened by the atmosphere of calm but vigilant confidence with which the cause of peace is defended there.

This atmosphere springs from the conviction that the great strengthening of the camp of the partisans of peace has immeasurably increased the chances of preventing a new war. I have had many opportunities to compare the reactions of the Soviet citizens to grave international events with the reactions of the people of other lands, and have often been astonished by the contrast between the clarity and soberness of the Soviet view and the panicky nervousness that the instigators of war have sown in Western minds.

Today the English reader looks in vain for objective reports on the Soviet Union in the London press. But he will have no difficulty in finding all kinds of malicious articles intended to discredit the Soviet Union. At the time when every item of news about its achievements is met with silence, wildly exaggerated attention is given to any shortcoming referred to by the Soviet press in a spirit of self-criticism.

On the principle that "man bites dog" is news while "dog bites man" is not, Moscow correspondents of American and British newspapers and news agencies are expected by their employers to comb the Soviet press for any evidence of "weak spots."

When after an extensive tour of the Soviet Union, during which all doors were open to them, a delegation of British women returned to England in July 1949, they were closely questioned for over two hours at a well-

attended press conference. The only English newspaper that even mentioned the event was the Communist "Daily Worker." Did the reporters of the principal London papers, one may ask, attend that press conference to hear what the travellers had to say about the Soviet Union, or in the hope that some anti-Soviet remark might be dropped that could be given prominence in the press?

The editorial writers of English capitalist newspapers often shed crocodile tears over the absence of closer relations between the British and Soviet people. In practice, however, these papers deliberately ignore items of news which could help to increase mutual understanding between these two lands. Space is made available only to "sensational items" culled from feuilletons, the pages of "Krokodil" or accounts of trials at People's Courts.

To an Englishman who believes that the land of his birth should play an honorable role in establishing co-operation between the nations of all the world, the British Government's part in the advancement of American plans for world domination cannot but arouse feelings of disquiet and indignation. Britain is today ruled by men who are betraying the trust put in them by the majority of the British people. The politicians who have climbed to power on the backs of the workingmen have adopted the foreign policy of Churchill.

The past few months have provided sufficient

evidence of the price the British people are having to pay for their government's policy. The purge of the civil service, more discreet in execution but in essence no different from the activities of the U.S. Un-American Activities Committee, continues to victimize officials ranging from distinguished scientists to Foreign Office clerks entrusted with nothing more confidential than addressing cases of whiskey to British diplomatists abroad. The exclusion of people of progressive views from private business firms, following hard on the heels of government measures, is a sign that Britain has already succumbed to the anti-Communist hysteria that is scourging the United States.

To justify this anti-Soviet hysteria the stale myth of "Soviet aggression" has been brought on to the stage; once again "experts on Soviet affairs" are predicting the inevitable collapse of the Soviet Union and its allies. Once again, every trivial incident, real or imaginary, is utilized for the purpose of carrying out a policy of rupture with the Soviet Union. Once again, everything done by the Soviet Government in its natural and legitimate efforts to protect its state interests, is stigmatized as "propaganda." What cries of delight are raised by the capitalist press whenever the Foreign Office or the State Department "resists attempts to be entangled in negotiations" with the Soviet Union! Reconciliatory moves by the Soviet Union which provide opportunities for agreement meet no more

response than they did in the past. Every proposal put forward as a basis for negotiation is declared to have concealed aims and is rejected without even being examined.

The obstinate and systematic rejection by Britain and the United States of all peaceful proposals by the Soviet Union is no less than the execution of a plan to prepare a new war, which has found its clearest expression in the North-Atlantic pact, whatever attempts are made to conceal its aggressive anti-Soviet character.

As I see it, the path my country is taking under the leadership of the government of Bevin and Attlee may end in England being transformed into a state that has been brought to vassal status by the U.S.A. And that is why I have written this book.

I have written it, too, because I believe in the possibility of another way, in close, friendly and equal co-operation with the Soviet Union. And that is the way to peace and to the well-being of England and her people.

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