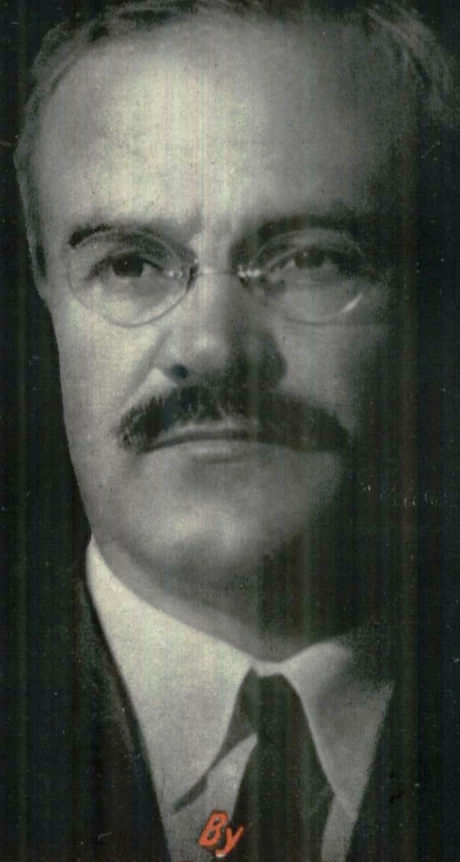
No. 22 How They Did It V. MOLOTOV George Gay

THE LIFE STORY OF

V. MOLOTOV



VOLUME 22

PRICE 6D.

By

GEORGE GAY

"HOW THEY DID IT" SERIES

PILOT PRESS LTD.

MOLOTOV

MOLOTOV

AUTHOR OF THE SOVIET-NAZI PACT

by

GEORGE GAY

PILOT PRESS LTD.
7, MILFORD LANE, LONDON, W.C.2

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY HUNT, BARNARD & CO., LTD.
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

I

TO INTRODUCE COMRADE MOLOTOV

WITHIN the walled fortress of the Kremlin, surrounded by barbaric towers painted red and green, churches with golden domes, barracks and ancient palaces, stands the stately building of the Narkomindel. It is dark and heavy, with an air of bygone glory hovering above it as befits the Foreign Office of one of the greatest powers on earth. A restless, unceasing activity animates its pompous old-fashioned halls. The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, which has been directed successively by men like Trotzky, Chicherin and Litvinov, has become an extensive and complicated department, which in no way distinguishes itself from corresponding institutions of capitalist states.

The Foreign Commissar has two Under-Secretaries. With their help he directs a whole network of offices: the special elaborate branch of the protocol, to which the Soviet have soon returned after a short excursion into diplomatic modernism, the departments for archives, the press, the diplomatic couriers and the Consular service stationed in nearly a hundred foreign cities. There are also the Legal and Economic sections. Continuous relations are maintained with foreign diplomatic

and consular representatives all over the Union and the more than thirty Russian Embassies and Legations abroad. Five separate departments exist for this task—three for the Western, two for the Eastern hemispheres. They gather the threads coming into the Kremlin from all over the world.

The nerve centre of all this activity is the big, darkish and spacious room where, closely watched by a portrait of Lenin, a sturdy man of medium height sits at a huge desk. It is covered with piles of papers and documents. Neatly sharpened pencils and pens, the ruler and knife are lined up in an orderly manner like soldiers. There is system and method in the arrangement of the desk, and systematic, methodical and efficient is the man who works at it. He has a fine forehead, keen eyes under a gold-rimmed pince-nez, a small black moustache and well-combed black hair that gradually turns grey. It is the face of one of the intelligentsia. There is something portly and academic about the whole man. He could be a doctor or a teacher or even a professor, the way he talks to you or writes or folds a document. His stature is not impressive. His slow and clumsy gait has earned him the nickname " Stone-bottom." His speech is measured, careful and premeditated. Unlike his Comrades Stalin, Voroshilov or Kaganovitch, he wears an ordinary lounge suit. Instead of the proletarian cloth cap he prefers the bourgeois felt hat. He does not look an old fighter and revolutionary. And yet Vyatcheslav Mikhailovitch

Molotov has not only gone through the turmoils of anti-Tsarist revolutions, but tenaciously and patiently he has also climbed up the ladder of Bolshevik power. Now he sits in the cabinet of the Narkomindel, weighty and important, directing Russia's relations with the outside world.

But does he direct them ?

II

SHADOW OF A GREATER LIGHT

By his official position, by the posts he occupies—for Molotov is not only Foreign Minister but also President of the Council of the People's Commissars which amounts to the Premiership in other countries—he is one of the highest personalities in the Soviet hierarchy. Like the other big Bolsheviks he has changed his name and has chosen a high-sounding, impressive one, which is meant to symbolise his revolutionary eminence. Molotov is derived from the verb "molotj," which means to grind. But this remains mere symbolism. Everyone outside and inside Russia knows that it is not Vyacheslav Mikhailovitch who grinds his country's destinies. A far greater personality stands behind him—Stalin, the man of steel. As Trotzky remarked, Molotov is nothing but "a figurehead pure and simple," a screen for Stalin behind which that formidable dictator shapes the things to come. Stalin is not invested by law with any authority. He is not the highest official in the U.S.S.R., but "merely" the General Secretary (not even the President) of the Communist Party, appointed and paid by the Central Committee. But by bidding his time, by elaborately

preparing every step, by striking at the right moment, by ruthlessness and personal magnetism he has attained more power than any Tsar ever held. Like Hitler and Mussolini he could have all the nominal regalia of a great despot. But he gives himself the air of modesty. He is consciously reticent and prefers to work behind the scenes. But in this background the whole tremendous force of the man is concentrated.

It is said that Stalin cannot bear other dominant personalities in his entourage, that he loathes criticism or contradiction. It is no mere chance that the "Pravda" only recently announced in headlines: "The Party does not want arguments!" The Party is Stalin, and he has proved that he tolerates only blind supporters, obedient servants who carry out his commands. It was his shrewdness, his extraordinary knowledge of people and his knack of using them for his own ends, which early suggested to him Molotov as the ideal person to rely on.

For Molotov is the perfect yes-man. Quiet, conventional and bureaucratic, he is in the judgment of all observers a "nonentity," "a shadow," "an obtuse supporter of his master," "passively obedient, dull and without personality." There is nothing dominating or commanding in him, no originality, no spark to kindle the imagination of the people. In all the years before and during the Revolution nothing happened to bring him to the fore. In the official *History of the Civil War in the U.S.S.R.*, published recently in Moscow, he is mentioned

only a few times, and even then briefly. To the millions of Russian people he was a stranger in those days. The great leaders of the Revolution scarcely noticed him. For Lenin he was " the best filing clerk in the Soviet Union." Trotzky, who did not grasp that this industrious assistant might some day turn the scales of party favour against him, called him a "small light." He was a mere party man, who looked after party affairs. And in the countless books written on Russia within the last twenty years in all the languages of the world, he is only mentioned in passing, only in the shadow of events connected with Stalin.

Molotov himself did not take part in any of the big exploits of the revolutionaries. He had never really been on the barricades, side by side with the old guard of Bolsheviks. He was never in command, never responsible for any of the great actions. He had never been in exile, never in the fire, and he was far from the peak of power, when the revolution was won. One searches in vain for his name under any early decree or treaty. He was neither at Brest-Litovsk like Trotzky, nor at Genoa in 1922, nor a year later in London like Rakovsky, when the Soviet for the first time came to the foreground of international affairs. He was a member of no mission, no really important task was ever entrusted to him. He was never in opposition, never connected with anything striking, surprising or extraordinary which could have drawn universal attention to him. People in Russia only

noticed him once, when Lenin rebuked him openly for questioning Trotzky's loyalty to the party. Then they forgot him, until Stalin pushed Molotov forward. Abroad his name only became known in 1930, when he became Premier.

Molotov is a voluminous writer, but what he writes is, though thorough and sound, pedantic, uninspired, conventional. He makes more and longer speeches than any other Soviet leader. The number of his public utterances make him Soviet Speaker No. 1. But his speeches are plain and colourless, containing only the conventional slogans and perorations. His oratory suffers from a severe handicap—his tendency to stutter. This has often played him an evil trick at the most solemn moments. In a big speech before the Moscow elections to the first Soviet Parliament under the new constitution in December 1937, everything went well till the peroration. When he came to the words " Long live comrade Stalin ! " however, he suddenly and convulsively stopped, and he had to make four attempts at his leader's name.

But never mind his dullness and lack of extraordinary qualities. There were other reasons that caused Molotov's rise to his present position. We have seen that Stalin had picked him out years ago and it was he, he alone who constantly pushed " his Molotov " from advancement to advancement. Whenever he wanted to secure his influence on a political body and to increase his power within it, he brought him in. In 1921 Stalin manoeuvred

Molotov into the Secretariat of the Central Committee (Russia's most influencial political institution). Later he made him member of the Politbüro, whose collegium of ten runs the affairs of the Union. Some years afterwards, when Rykov had to relinquish his post of President of the Council of People's Commissars on account of "Right wing opposition," Stalin made Molotov Prime Minister. In the spring of this year, when it was desirable that the Kremlin should put up a baffling resistance to the British and French Peace-Front proposals, he placed him also in Litvinov's chair. All this happened only because Stalin was so sure of Vyatcheslav Mikhailovitch.

But it was not self-interest that tied Molotov to Stalin. Nor was it merely the feeling of gratitude on his part. From the very first moment, when he met the Georgian colossus, he was irresistibly, hopelessly conquered by him. He submitted to Stalin's magnetism, to the crushing influence of his formidable, mysterious personality, his cleverness, astuteness and force. Molotov genuinely loves and admires Stalin. He is unselfishly loyal and faithful to him. The leader's words are his dogma, his creed. "We were and are still bearing the banners of Leninism," he said one day echoing his master, utterly unable to see, that Leninism has long been replaced by Stalinism.

But what difference would it make if he did see it? It *is* Stalinism to which he clings—Stalinism and the man

who has shaped it. It is a loyalty because, and even in spite of, the many things that Stalin does. In 1922, Stalin, to assure his ultimate success against Trotzky and the Old Bolsheviks, made himself Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Molotov who then held this post was relegated to the position of an assistant. But he never even resented the degradation and continued to work for the master. When some years ago, after Molotov had already risen to the premiership, there were rumours in Moscow that Stalin might take over that post himself, no one doubted that this could be done at a moment's notice. For it was absolutely certain that Molotov would immediately step aside, if it was the wish, if it was in the interests of the man he worshipped. But Stalin has good reason not to assume the premiership. It would be difficult for him to reconcile the functions of a Prime Minister who concludes Pacts of Collaboration with Fascist States, with the functions of the leader of World Communism.

In view of this unflinching loyalty, it is interesting to investigate what Stalin's personal attitude is towards his lieutenant. Some light is thrown on this by the following episode related by Bazhanov, Stalin's former secretary who fled from the Russian terror in 1928.

It is after lunch in the small three-roomed apartment of the dictator. The family chief sits in an armchair near the window and smokes his pipe. The Kremlin inside telephone rings.

"Koba, Molotov is calling you," his wife says, addressing him by the name reserved only for intimate use.

"Tell him I am asleep," Stalin answers in the presence of his secretary, thus demonstrating his moodiness and lordly disregard for the man who is so devoted to him.

But on the other hand, even Trotzky in his memoirs recollects an occasion, when years ago Stalin openly acknowledged that it would be impossible for him to lead the Party without an assistant like Molotov. And indeed, he owes much to him.

III

THE MAN OF NEW RUSSIA

FAITHFULNESS is not Molotov's only merit in the eyes of Stalin. The Red Tsar wants no mere tools to fulfil his decrees, but people of his own spirit, of identical affinities, convictions and mentality as himself. When he assumed absolute power in Russia, a tremendous change took place not only in the whole policy of the Kremlin, but also in the constellation of its leaders. The group around Lenin, which had been replaced by Stalin's men, had been cosmopolitan and international by education, experience and interests. They were brilliant and cultured intellectuals, whatever their shortcomings may have been, doctrinaire visionaries of great power, at home in Europe and European traditions. Lenin, Trotzky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Litvinov and *their* comrades had long lived abroad—in Vienna and Paris, in Zürich and London. They had made foreign friends, they knew and respected their languages, customs, mentality. They had a broad outlook on the world, a keen sense for international affairs, for the ways of people and how to deal with them. Though ardent revolutionaries and quite prepared to set the world aflame, they also admired Europe's achieve-

ments. Somehow or other it was always possible for Western people to come to an understanding, to establish contacts with them.

But now, as Eugene Lyons has remarked, tough-skinned ruthless drill-sergeants from the ranks of the proletariat have displaced the argumentative intellectuals of middle-class origin. The men around Stalin are just as narrow-minded and shrewd, ignorant and unromantic as himself. They do not care for argument and discussion, but only for obedience, iron decrees and terror. Most of them have never been abroad. They have never tasted Western civilisation, never seen how people elsewhere work and live. They know nothing of the exciting, thrilling career of revolutionary exiles living among foreigners, learning from them and thus widening their own world. They never had any formal education, never studied another idiom but their own and never actually bothered to find out what the world outside was like.

As a result, the Stalin group is earthy, Russian through and through and conscious of the West only as something alien, unfriendly and treacherous. Those among them who are convinced communists loathe Europe as the nest of capitalism. The imperialists of the Kremlin on the other hand, see in it only the opposing camp of other imperialists, and both parties in Moscow are agreed that the right attitude to take up against Europe is : caution, distrust and hostility. That is why it is so difficult, so

impossible now for the West to make itself understood to them. When Stalin proclaimed the end of the world revolution and the adoption of "Socialism for one Country," he automatically became Russian pure and simple, and nationalist in his thinking. By eliminating his internationalistic opponents one after the other, he accentuated this process more and more, until his regime has now become outspoken nationalistic and imperialistic —exactly as those of the other dictatorships.

What Stalin dreams of now is a world state, most probably communist in its internal structure, under Russian domination, with the Kremlin as its centre. Thus he has renewed the old programme of the Tsars, though under new ideological slogans, and Russia, which according to Lenin and Trotzky was to be the torch of world revolution, is old Russia once again in mentality, action and renunciation of Western ideals. The men around Stalin—Kaganovitch, Kalinin, Voroshilov, Ordonikidze, Mikoyan, are typical representatives of this change. They are of the same dark, narrow, anti-foreign convictions as the Man of Steel. And so is Molotov, of whom—it is said—Stalin is particularly fond for the peculiar reason that, like himself, Vyacheslav Mikhailovitch had never been an exile abroad.

Yet this is not his only virtue. For the tremendous task of Russia's internal reconstruction, industrialisation and consolidation, Stalin needs technicians, specialists, organisers, men of practical abilities. He needs efficiency,

reliability, conscientiousness. That is precisely what he finds in Molotov. Not even his worst enemy can deny that the Soviet Premier and foreign Commissar has all these qualities. He has a thorough and minute knowledge of Russian internal affairs, which make him an authority within the Kremlin. He is a splendid administrator. He is lucid and intelligent, so that Stalin often listens to him before taking a decision. Whether or how often he follows Molotov's advice is another matter. But foreign diplomats in Moscow have often thought that Molotov's words carry a certain weight with Stalin. Molotov is closely connected with Marshal Voroshilov. Both represent the so-called forward school in Soviet politics. Before the invasion of Finland began, it was said that Stalin, Kaganovitch and a few others were against the war. But Molotov backed by Voroshilov persuaded Stalin. The arguments he used, however, are known only in the inner circles of Moscow and perhaps—in Berlin.

Some people say that the Soviet dictator intends Molotov to be his successor, so that, as Mr. Gunther has heard, he is being nicknamed " Tsarevitsch "—the crown prince. But apart from these relatively rare cases of consultation, where Stalin lends him an ear, he is completely dominated by the master. His intelligence does not prevent him from being directly inspired by Stalin in every action. Under the regime of Lenin courtesy, even in the closest circles of the comrades, was an iron law. Stalin has introduced a new usage: insults, abuse,

assaults directed against the opposition, and Molotov is scrupulously copying it. Prompted by the Georgian, he often participated in violent vilification of " Trotzkyists," and once he even did not hesitate openly to upbraid the former opposition for " having fled abroad from Tsarist terror instead of facing it," whereby he apparently quite forgot that Lenin too had once been an emigré.

But apart from these occasional outbursts, perhaps to be explained by the peculiar atmosphere of the Kremlin, where denunciation of enemies and profession of one's own loyalty seem not inappropriate even to the highest dignitaries—apart from these outbursts, we say, Molotov prefers work to words, and the quieter atmosphere of his study seems his proper sphere. He has an astounding capacity for work. According to Henry Barbusse, he is " un des plus important travailleur à l'U.S.R." (one of the most important workers in the Union). He is reported to be busy sixteen hours a day, and everything he tackles is irreproachably well done. Able, conscientious and disinterested, he is an ideal servant of the State. He has no personal ambition, no greed for money as displayed by all the high Nazi dignitaries. He does not toil for profit. He seeks no personal publicity. For that reason he is not " popular " in the true sense of the word. There is not a single story or anecdote about him which carries his name into the heart or fancy of the masses.

It was enough for Trotzky to have been Foreign Commissar only one day to inspire a story over which the

people could laugh. In fact it was on the first day of his appointment as Foreign Commissar that he came into the magnificent building of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs—to find no one there. Only two old messengers were in their usual place. Trotzky sat down at his pompous desk and began to read the documents. He found among them an enquiry by the Dutch government on a minor matter, answered it with his own hand, addressed it to His Excellency the Dutch Minister, called one of the messengers and handed him the letter for delivery. The messenger read the address and said scornfully:

"Allow me to remark: there are Dutch herrings, and there is Dutch cheese. But there is no Dutch Minister. You mean the Netherland representative, of course." And Trotzky had to accept this lesson in diplomacy.

Another day he was visited by the Spanish Chargé d'Affaires, who having been recalled back to Madrid, hinted that in view of his long services in Russia he had hoped for a decoration. Trotzky was at a loss what to do. Luckily he remembered that in one of the drawers was a heap of old Tsarist medals, which the former officials always held in readiness if they had to receive an unexpected important official visitor. Now all the medals lay sadly in a box for cigars. Trotzky took the whole box and offered it to the diplomat. "Here you are," he said, "choose which you like."

Well, Molotov has no medals to offer, and there are no

such stories in circulation about him. Perhaps he regrets it. For he himself is affable and likes a good joke. Besides, good jokes are the best way to people's hearts. But there is nothing striking or spectacular about him. Nor is there anything in his life story.

IV

LIFE STORY

MOLOTOV is the only person in Stalin's present entourage not clearly proletarian by birth and upbringing. His original name, Scriabin, suggests his former bourgeois connections, and in fact he is the nephew of the famous Russian composer with an identical name. Vyacheslav Mikhailovitch was born in 1889 in Kazan in a family of merchant clerks. He went to a dreary school, did some dreary work, depressed and unhappy by the drab life in that big provincial town. Through some fellow students and workers he was brought in touch with socialist literature. His mind eagerly grasped the new ideals. To the horror of his relatives he began revolutionary work as early as 1905. This was the time of secret meetings in dark basements, flights from the police, printing of illegal literature and organisation of Red student's circles. In 1906 he officially joined the party. In 1909 he was arrested by the Tsarist police, tried and deported. But even in exile he continued his activities, organising railwaymen.

Molotov returned to European Russia in 1911. He became secretary of Bolshevist journals. One year later

he was on the staff of the *Pravda*. Altogether he was arrested six times and sentenced to deportation twice. During the war he studied at the Petersburg Polytechnic. He was a so-called "legal Bolshevik," representing the party in the Imperial Duma. At the same time he worked in the sphere of law.

Then came the Revolution of February 1917. Nothing much was heard of Molotov in these days. During the February Revolution the Bolshevik Party was weakly organised. Lenin was still in Switzerland, Stalin in Siberia, and yet the Party remained in contact with the masses. It preserved, against many odds, its main organisation in Russia. This was the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party, and one of its leaders was Molotov. Then his name crops up again in March 1917, when he was among the delegates of the great Bolshevik rally in liberated Russia. He was also present at the Conference of the big Red leaders in the following month, when Lenin, immediately after his German sponsored return from exile, put forward his programme of action—"The Task of the Proletariat in the present Revolution." At the sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party in July and August 1917 in St. Petersburg, Molotov for the first time played an important part in the Soviet destiny. He then showed his absolute faith in Stalin by administering a sharp rebuff to those who were not in agreement with the future dictator. Stalin was for direct action—open revolution. Molotov supported him. "There is no

possibility of a peaceful transfer of power to the Soviet," he said. " The turning point lies in the termination of the peaceful character of the Revolution. Power can only be secured by force. The Proletariat desire to take power, can take power, and will take power." It is impossible to ascertain how far these words influenced decisions at the Congress, but its direct outcome was the October rising, which after a fearful struggle brought the Soviet into the Kremlin.

Molotov who had played his role in it, now got his first official appointment. In 1918 Lenin made him chairman of the Council for National Economy. Then he became President of the Executive of the Novgorod region, and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party in the Ukraine. In 1922 he was already member of the Central Committee for all Russia. The tenth Party Congress made him Secretary to the Central Committee. But by 1921 Stalin had already begun his quiet and patient scheming for power. To assure his ultimate success he sought an effective instrument in the Secretariat of the Central Committee, a position which was regarded as limited to technical functions, though in reality its importance was enormous, since it began to exercise control over all official appointments. He succeeded in 1922 after the eleventh Party Congress, when he ousted Molotov. His manœuvre passed then almost unnoticed. By now one has seen how the Secretariat of the Party has become an omnipotent device in the hands of the Red leader.

Bukharin's joke in 1921 that the " history of humanity was divided into three great periods: the Matriarchate, the Patriarchate and the—Secretariat " is no longer a joke.

Having displaced Molotov, Stalin not only had to recompense his friend, but to look further afield for himself. He knew he would need his support. The Secretariat of the Party was now his instrument of power. Even in party circles no one spoke any more of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but only of the dictatorship of the secretariat. The Political Bureau, highest organ of the Party, elected by the Central Committee, became a mere consultative body, slightly less a fiction than the Party itself, as Trotzky observed. It was dominated by a camarilla round Stalin. The latter brought Molotov in. When this happened in 1926 everyone was surprised. Outside the inner circles of the Kremlin scarcely anyone had heard his name before. Yet Stalin did not care. He carried on with his plans. A successor for the dead Lenin was found in Rykov, who had become the new Premier. With the banishment of Trotzky, who refused to accept " Socialism in one country " and propagated world revolution, Stalin was in full power. He began to undermine the position of the leaders of the Right. Within a short time his absolute dictatorship was assured. Molotov advanced with him step by step. In 1930 Stalin made him Prime Minister.

This gave him a position in Russia second only to

Stalin's. Assiduous, firm and stodgy Molotov saw to it, that no one should push him out again. He at once took over all the terrific amount of work reserved for the Chairman of the Sovnarkom (the Collegium of Soviet Commissars). In addition he became President of the State Economic Council and Chief of the all-important Council of Labour and Defence. After the constitution of the first Soviet Parliament he took over a constituency of his own—the Molotov ward in Moscow. He sits on endless commissions, delivers countless speeches on internal affairs, on cost accounting, on the Five Year Plan, on farming questions. He knows everything, he praises, he accuses. The practice of criticism and abuse is carried by him to extremes. When at a meeting of the Supreme Council of the Soviet he denounces "wreckers, indolent officials and spies," many people tremble in the wide U.S.S.R. If there is an unpleasant, difficult job to be done, Stalin gives it to Molotov. At the time of the Kulak rebellion Molotov had to admit in a speech the nasty tricks the peasants had played on the government by killing their cattle and destroying their grain. When Stalin decided to snub Britain and to compromise with his arch-enemy Hitler, who had done nothing but abuse the Kremlin, he chose Molotov. And the latter had not only to carry out this policy but to defend it before the peoples of the Soviet Union and the world. But Stalin need not worry. Molotov, the faithful friend and shadow, did it well.

On the other hand, Molotov is also the lion of great occasions. It was he who at the All Union Congress of 1935 in Moscow, in a speech that was broadcast by over sixty wireless stations to the remotest parts of the Union, proposed the complete change in the Soviet electoral system, which was meant to sponsor the democratisation of the country. Since Stalin is clever enough outwardly to preserve the show of his equality with his comrades, it is Molotov who presides at the meetings of the Political Bureau, sitting at the top of the long red table, covered with a crimson cloth, Stalin at his left. As president of the Cabinet, Vyacheslav Mikhailovitch every day signs mountains of decrees, from the most insignificant ones up to those which are definitely legislative in character and actually here to be ratified by Parliament. In between he assists at all big official functions. In his capacity as Premier he received Eden, Benes and Laval, when some years ago they paid state visits to Moscow. He welcomed the then British and French Ministers and the Czech President in his big study, and Stalin only "casually" dropped in for a chat. Molotov was also present at the great Gorki Jubilee Festival at the Grand Opera in Moscow, where he sat laughing and joking next to Stalin in the former Imperial box. He is seen at parades, demonstrations and patriotic meetings. And yet in spite of this crushing weight of engagements he finds time and leisure for his family.

Molotov is a strong vegetarian and teetotaller. He does

not particularly like parties and noisy amusements, so popular with the Russians, but prefers a quiet hour at home. He is an ideal father who loves his children tenderly and watches over their progress. When they were small he kissed them good-night every evening. Undoubtedly he is doing everything possible to provide for their future. But like the children of all the other big Soviet leaders the young Molotovs do not play any part in official life. As a husband Molotov is said to be attentive and chivalrous. His wife, the beautiful and elegant Pauline Zhemtshuzhina shares his interests. She is a member of the Party and was a cabinet minister too, having been appointed Commissar for the Fishing Industries. Before that she was Assistant Commissar in charge of the Perfumery and Cosmetic Trust, whose task it was to popularise the habit of using powder, rouge and lipstick, originally branded as "bourgeois." This propaganda, however, had no special appeal among the Russian women, and very little attention is paid to it now. It was known that during the time of her activities in the service of beauty, Madame Molotov did not use cosmetics herself.

Handsome and attractive, with long dark hair and slightly Mongol features, she does not need cosmetics. Besides, she remembered very well how Madame Lunatsharsky did harm to her husband's career by setting her ambition on being the smartest woman in Moscow. Pauline does not need to strive for it with artificial means.

She is universally regarded as charming and attractive. Her natural tact helps her a great deal in playing the hostess at the Narkomindel, whose task it is constantly to receive foreign emissaries and diplomats. People who have been present at her receptions say that she bears the brunt of the task of entertaining the guests, Molotov being an amiable onlooker.

Their married life is conventionally happy. They regard each other as comrades. In the late evenings, when both have finished their work, they discuss all its aspects to the accompaniment of the cosy humming tune of the samovar steaming on the table. They read and talk of politics and Soviet progress. Only one problem has so far consistently been left out of their conversations: international relations. Molotov has usually shown very little interest in foreign affairs, so that his ignorance of this subject was great.

Such is the man whom Stalin, in the spring of this year, made Foreign Minister.

V

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Russia's foreign policy under the direction of Molotov is very different from what it had been under his predecessors. In fact, it passed through a few distinctly different stages.

The establishment of the Soviet regime in Rusia had raised a number of important questions for the outside world. How would the Communist Kremlin adjust its diplomatic dealings with the governments of the capitalist states? What kind of relations would develop between a country where the state monopolised foreign trade? How could the activities of the Communist International be reconciled with normally friendly relations between the Soviet government and their bourgeois counterparts abroad which the International was out to destroy? These questions were immediately answered by Moscow, and at first in a way which little pleased the outside world.

The fact is that during the first years of Soviet rule Moscow regarded the outside world as an enemy camp (not the least reason for this attitude was the armed intervention of the Allied Powers in the Russian Civil war) and reacted to it with marked hostility, largely through the

offices of the Comintern. Its hope was to destroy the capitalist states from within and thus to encourage the world revolution of Communism,—a hope which was stimulated by the chaotic conditions in post-war Europe.

But this was a vain hope. The world revolution did not materialise. The fifth Congress of the Comintern, which then largely dictated Russian foreign policy, in 1924 still insisted that an immediate struggle between foreign capitalism and the Russian proletariat was imminent. But already in 1925 it was officially admitted that the capitalist world had entered upon a period of stability. The next congress of the Comintern met only in 1928. The peculiar interval of four years has never been explained, but Trotzky suggests that the Soviet leaders were then still hoping for some international development which could be regarded as a proof of the wisdom of their hope for a general revolution: a successful upheaval in at least some colonial country, or a great strike which would indicate the approaching downfall of capitalism. This proof, however, did not come, and it was essential therefore to make corrections in the foreign policy.

These corrections were undertaken by the Stalin regime. The official adoption of "Socialism in one single country" was a result of the unfulfilled hope for world revolution. At the same time it sprang from the realisation that it was the degree of success attained in raising the standard of life in the U.S.S.R., and not the machinations of the Comintern that would stimulate the working men in

Western Europe to imitate their Russian comrades. To raise the standard of life, it was essential for the Moscow leaders to shift their interests from international to domestic problems. From the year 1928 onwards they became more and more absorbed in the gigantic task of building up Russian resources, of creating agricultural wealth and a tremendous mining and manufacturing industry. The speedy industrialisation of Russia demanded closer co-operation with the more advanced countries, as had been admitted by Stalin as early as December, 1925. "In the field of international relations," he declared at a Congress of the Russian Communist Party, "we are confronted with the need of consolidating and developing what has been accomplished by the Soviet." In short: he approved of the peaceful co-existence of the U.S.S.R. alongside the capitalist nations.

Naturally the change in the Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union was not sharp and sudden. It developed only gradually under the influence of the modifications in the teachings and domestic policy of the Moscow government. The attempts to improve Russia's relations with the European nations did not then mean the abandonment of revolutionary activities. The abandonment of the idea of a speedy revolution in Europe drew the attention of the Soviet to the undeveloped countries in Asia, to which Lenin had attached so much importance. China, the traditional arena of world imperialism, offered ideal opportunities for revolutionary propaganda that might

set the whole Far East ablaze. Accordingly Karakhan, the Soviet envoy at Nanking, was actively engaged in complying with the instructions of Moscow. He had great success. In 1923 Michail Borodin came to Canton and soon became an important factor in Chinese politics. Moscow spared neither effort nor money to create a Chinese Soviet Republic. But the revolution in China proved as abortive as it had been in Hungary, or Bavaria. In 1927 Borodin was forced to return to Russia. The East, too, refused to be socialised by the Kremlin. This was a severe blow. It increased the determination of the Soviet leaders to embark on "Socialism in one country."

To achieve this the Kremlin laid down two lines of policy: the prevention of a new war, which would destroy all chances of Russia's internal reconstruction, and the establishment of closer economic relations with the capitalist nations. As early as in 1921 the Bolsheviks had realised the importance of close economic contacts with foreign states, which was an essential corollary of their New Economic Policy, the so-called N.E.P. But then this realisation had been sacrificed to ideological considerations, until in 1927 the Soviet at the World Economic Conference in Geneva advanced the thesis of the necessity of co-operation between the capitalist and socialist systems.

Even more striking was the programme outlined by M. Litvinov at Geneva in November 1927, at the

League's Preparatory Commission on Disarmament. Litvinov demanded an " immediate, complete and general disarmament " to be accomplished within one year. His proposal was of little practical value, but it served the great purpose of announcing to the world that Russia had definitely changed aggressive intentions for peaceful collaboration.

Moscow's peaceful intentions and her wish for sincere international co-operation, as initiated in 1927, was strikingly demonstrated by her attitude towards Japan. The latter had been guilty of provocation after provocation in aggressive frontier incidents, in fishery disputes and in repeated maltreatment of the Soviet officials administering the jointly owned Manchurian railway. In spite of this Russia has always shown an unusual and remarkable forbearance. The seizure of the railway by the Japanese in 1929, after the raid upon the Soviet consulate in Harbin, created an extremely tense international situation. But the Briand-Kellog Pact, to which the Soviet government was a party, was invoked, and after a certain exhibition of military forces, the question was settled by direct negotiation. Finally the railway was even sold to Tokio on the easiest terms.

Another bad crisis was provoked in the Far East by wanton Japanese occupation of Manchuria. But during the whole painful event Moscow displayed a remarkable spirit of conciliation. Of course, the Moscow foreign Office and the press protested against the Japanese action,

and troop movements were reported. But no attempt was made to stop the army of the " Rising Sun " on its march into China, so that avoidance of war almost at any cost seemed then to have become the keynote of Russia's foreign policy. Incidentally, it is well worth recollecting that the Manchurian conflict provided Molotov with an opportunity to make a declaration, which has been strangely contradicted by later events elsewhere. " Our policy of non-interference in this conflict," he said in November 1931," arises from our respect for international treaties to which China is a partner, from our respect for the sovereign rights and the independence of other nations, and from our unqualified rejection of any policy of military occupation and intervention." This attitude on the part of the Soviet persisted also during Japan's later attempts to violate international law by a policy of banditry in China. She did not move (apart from lending unofficial assistance to Marshal Chiang-Kai-Shek, of course), when the Mikado launched a new war on that unfortunate country in 1937. And only when the Japanese directly encroached about Soviet rights as during the incident in the summer of 1938, when they occupied the hill Chiang-Kung-Feng, leased to Russia 70 years ago, did Moscow's troops go into action. To act differently would have meant the sacrifice of her prestige as a great power. But even then a compromise agreement was soon patched up.

Towards the European states, too, the Soviet government for years pursued a policy of appeasement. Litvinov,

since 1930 in sole charge of the Narkomindel, has repeatedly informed the diplomatic world that the Soviet entirely accepted the view that the internal organisation of a country was a matter for its own people to decide, and that there was no reason why nations adopting different economic and political systems should not live in amity together. To prove this the U.S.S.R. with quiet persistence began to work for the conclusion of Non-Aggression Treaties with all its neighbours willing to join them. The beginning was made with Asiatic countries, then followed Europe. Negotiations for a pact with Poland were started in August 1926. Similar negotiations were soon afterwards opened with Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland, though without much success at the time. They were resumed at a later date, and resulted in the signing, in February 1929, of the so-called Litvinov Non-Aggression Protocol. The U.S.S.R., Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Rumania were parties to this agreement, later joined also by Persia and Turkey. In spite of this general Protocol the Soviet insisted also on direct pacts with their neighbours. In July 1931 a Non-Aggression Pact was signed with Afghanistan, and the treaties with Lithuania and Turkey were renewed. At the same time the Union made an agreement with Italy providing for a exchange of information on their respective armed forces. At the beginning of 1932 followed the Non-Aggression Pacts with Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and finally with France. In December of the same year Moscow resumed

diplomatic relations with China, broken off in 1927. But perhaps the greatest triumph was the achievement of recognition by the United States, the sole great power which had hitherto persisted in ignoring diplomatically the existence of the Kremlin. This recognition, which led to a recovery in the mutual trade of the two countries, was accompanied by the sweeping assurance Litvinov gave President Roosevelt not to permit on their territory any activity, " which has as an aim the overthrow or forcible change in the political or social order of the United States." And these professions of good intentions towards other powers were followed by the suggestion of a Formula defining Aggression, which was accepted by the Little Entente, the Baltic States and Poland.

All these efforts at the consolidation of international peace were crowned by Russia's admittance to the League of Nations in 1933. Up to the latter part of 1933 one would search in vain for a friendly reference to Geneva in the speeches of Soviet leaders. Abuse and contempt were heaped upon it, and the town was usually represented as a centre for capitalist scheming and the preparation of a war of intervention against the U.S.S.R. To stress this attitude still more, the Kremlin frequently emphasised its special sympathy for the powers which were defeated in the last war. Isolated from the victorious powers like the vanquished, Russia naturally drew close to them. The result was the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922, which established strong political and economic ties between Moscow and

Berlin, which lasted over a decade. But these relations cooled off when von Papen became chancellor of the Reich, because he was regarded as an advocate of a conservative entente between France and Germany, which was to be directed against Russia. This process was further accentuated and nearly brought to a breaking point, when Nazism began to dominate Germany. Hitler's insane campaign of hatred against the "Marxist criminals" in the Kremlin, the persecution of the German Communists, the tendency of the Nazi leaders to give their movement the form of an anti-Bolshevik crusade, conversations with and moral support for Ukrainian separatist emigrés, the Führer's programme of expansion and colonisation in the East, and worst of all the incessant attempts of the Berlin diplomacy to obtain from Britain and France a free hand in Russia, combined to create the greatest apprehension in Moscow. And on the Soviet side the conviction grew that in the near future Germany might be as threatening in the West as Japan was considered to be in the Far East.

This apprehension increased Soviet efforts for the preservation of the *status quo*. Karl Radek, the leading Russian publicist, began to defend the Versailles Treaty on the ground that it could only be changed by war, which would be a catastrophy in itself and would end in a still more undesirable re-drawing of the map of Europe. At the same time France and Poland, deeply alarmed at the rise of militant and aggressive Germany under Hitler,

became very willing to meet Soviet overtures for friendship halfway. Neither of the two could be blind to the advantages of destroying the former close contact between Moscow and Berlin. M. Herriot, leader of the French Radical Socialist Party, and M. Pierre Cot, Minister of Aviation, went on an official visit to Moscow in Autumn 1933, Military attachés were exchanged between the U.S.S.R. and France. Artists and journalists travelled to and fro between Russia and the Baltic States, and in the beginning of 1934 Col. Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, went to the Soviet capital. Even the thorny question of the Soviet-Rumanian frontier, which had remained like an open wound after the persistent refusal on the part of the Russians to recognise the validity of the Rumanian occupation of Bessarabia, was allowed to lapse. It was a paradox of political history that the immediate result of the advent to power of the German National Socialists, who had planned a crusade against Bolshevism on an international scale, turned out to be the establishment of friendship between the Soviet Union and France, the strongest European military nation. This considerably strengthened the Russian position in the concert of European powers. And it created the favourable atmosphere for Moscow's entry into the League, in which she, too, now sought protection against possible dangers.

Soviet membership in the League, which until 1933 seemed absolutely unthinkable, brought a new stimulus to Geneva. M. Litvinov at once began actively to

support all collective operations envisaged by the Covenant. His slogan, "Peace is indivisable," went all over the world. Stalin himself came out of the mystic detachment usual for him to receive with honour and cordiality successive ministers of foreign powers like Eden, Benes and Laval, who in 1935 went to Moscow to cement mutual friendship and collaboration. Intent on strengthening still more the status quo in Eastern Europe, Litvinov also proposed to guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of the Baltic States by means of a common declaration, which was to be signed also by Poland and Germany. But Hitler, unwilling to tie his hands, declined this so-called Eastern Locarno. This refusal was naturally interpreted in Moscow as a danger signal. The Soviet now proceeded to negotiate the conclusion of a virtual military alliance with France and then, with the concurrence of the other Members of the Little Entente, also with Czechoslovakia. These alliances, duly ratified, had the same aim as all the other Russian moves: not only to safeguard themselves against Germany, but secure their rear in the West, in the event of their being faced with war with Japan. This same defensive motive was to be detected in the special Soviet attempts to establish the friendliest relations with Turkey, which holds the key to the Black Sea. Moscow granted Ancara a long term loan in kind, in the form of machinery and equipment, promoted the exchange of ceremonial visits of their representatives, and was

regarded for a long time as the greatest friend of Turkey.

The same attempts at co-operation with the family of nations were undertaken by the Russians also in the economic field. Vast commercial agreements with a number of States were concluded, and Soviet trade with Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, America and other countries was brisk. Simultaneously they continued untiringly to patch up their diplomatic defences. In spite of Japan's persistent refusal to sign a Non-Aggression treaty with Moscow, Molotov is reported to have said at a great Soviet Congress: "We hope Japan's refusal is only temporary. Our position remains the same as before—one of neutrality and non-intervention. Recently there have been false and unfriendly statements by certain Japanese officials, which do not better neighbourly contacts. Nevertheless, we shall continue our peaceful policy." This was a striking proof of the spirit of conciliation displayed by Moscow. The keynote of its whole policy had become: collaboration and peaceful adjustment of conflicts instead of war. And this attitude was still more strikingly displayed during the Abyssinian crisis in 1935–36.

Here Russia immediately demanded the application of sanctions against the aggressor who had so callously flouted League principles. She was foremost among the nations in applying them, and Litvinov did not tire of stressing the importance and absolute necessity of "resistance against aggression" if Europe was to survive.

Russia had no quarrel with Italy. On the contrary, their relations have always been very cordial in spite of ideological divergencies. But she was defending a principle—the doctrine of the preference of reason to force. It is tragi-comic, that it is that very Russia, which now tramples upon this doctrine so ardently defended only a few years ago. But at that time there is not the least doubt that Litvinov was sincere. He proved that also when later occasions arose. He was one of the first to support collective action at the Conference of Nyon, when it was decided to stop the submarine piracy in the Mediterranean. He constantly indicted the comedy of "Non-Intervention" during the Spanish civil war. When Austria was invaded, he suggested immediate collective action against the Nazi bandits. During each big crisis that shook Europe after Hitler's advent to power, he was ready for collective measures against the lawbreakers—right up to the tragic days of the Munich agreement, which was a turning point in European affairs in many ways.

Thus one sees clearly that from 1927 until late 1938 Russian Foreign Policy was directed at peace. To that end all efforts of the Narkomindel and its Chief were directed. This policy was well summarised in Litvinov's Statement to the French Press in July 1935. He laid down the following three principles on which the foreign relations of Moscow were based: "First the Soviet government does not need land or property

belonging to other countries, and it, therefore, has no intention of making war on any one. Secondly, under the condition of modern imperialism, any war must be converted into a universal bloody clash and slaughter; for under present-day conditions no war can be localised and no country is able to maintain neutrality, no matter how hard it may try. Thirdly any war causes privations and sufferings primarily to the masses, and the Government of the Soviet Union, which is a government of the toilers, is opposed to and hates war."

But suddenly and unexpectedly Litvinov was dismissed in the spring of 1939. Molotov came in his stead. And his predecessor's noble doctrine was forgotten. Finland, the Baltic States and Poland know the result.

VI

MOLOTOV TAKES OVER

On May 3, 1939, Vyacheslav Mikhailovitch Molotov sprang into world prominence. Even as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars he had been relatively little known abroad. Now, practically, over-night he took the place of the familiar genial figure of Litvinov. The surprise and the shock abroad were great. For a long time rumours had been circulating that he would be removed from his post. Although an "Old Bolshevik" and a member of the Communist Party's Special Committee, he had never at any time taken sides in inner party strife, but had confined himself to foreign affairs and had taken little interest in the internal life of Russia. This helps to explain his long tenure of office. In fact he had been in control of his department for eleven years, and with his departure there disappeared the most experienced of all Foreign Ministers, a man who had become a technical expert rather than a politician.

The outside world was seriously puzzled as to the deeper meaning of this change. Litvinov had been known in every European capital and in America. He

was popular because of his human touch, his common sense and quick, sharp humour. He was respected as a brilliant diplomatist, a statesman of vision, as a European. His foreign policy had been irreproachable. It was he who had achieved the growing rapprochement between Russia and the Western Powers. But what sort of a man was Molotov? What did he stand for? These questions were particularly grave in view of the negotiations Britain and France were conducting with the Kremlin, negotiations upon the successful conclusion of which European stability and security depended. Hitler had just finished off the unfortunate Czechoslovakia. Now he stood hammering at the frontiers of Poland. Was he to be allowed to go on trampling down one independent state after another, and eventually the whole of Europe? No! He had to be stopped. Britain and France guaranteed the integrity of Poland, but being unable to lend her decisive assistance single-handed, they endeavoured to draw Russia into the guarantee. If they succeeded in building up their Peace-Front with Russian assistance, it was obvious that Hitler would not dare to challenge it and there would be no war. The negotiations which were started with Litvinov, had run with a certain smoothness. But how would things turn out with Molotov as a partner? Why had Litvinov been dropped just in the midst of most vital discussions for general security?

The Kremlin and the Russian press were silent. Foreign journalists and diplomats in Moscow thought that the

change of personnel in the Narkomindel had no deeper significance, for it was not the Minister in charge, but Stalin who determined policy. As if to confirm this opinion Molotov received the British ambassador and made it clear to him in a long talk that " Russia had no intention of changing her international course." In spite of this London was puzzled. Paris took a serious view, for Litvinov was known to be in favour of a hard and fast alliance with the Western democracies, whilst Molotov was understood to take the contrary line. In Scandinavia it was thought that Litvinov had to go because the Kremlin was dissatisfied with the slow progress of the negotiations and with the British and French objections to Russia's proposals. To speed up the conclusion of the Triple Pact Stalin had chosen Molotov, who, being more an extreme politician than a diplomat, would attempt to press for more concessions on the part of London and Paris. The universal view was that the latter would have to give in on certain points, now that the inflexible and hard bargainer Molotov faced them across the green table. But who was prepared for the things that were to come in August ?

Now, looking back, it has become completely obvious why Litvinov had to go. He had become unpopular with Stalin on account of his international foreign policy and its lack of results. It is difficult to say what Stalin's attitude would have been in case Litvinov had presented him with a workable and reliable agreement between

Russia and the Western Powers. He might have respected it or he might have eventually violated it if his interests demanded it. But it is clear that Stalin, whatever his ultimate designs were, could not go on watching complacently how Russia's genuine attempts at collaboration with London and Paris were repeatedly double-crossed and cold-shouldered. Since Litvinov's attempts at collective security and collaboration with the West had failed, another policy had to be tried out. This failure was not Litvinov's fault. He had devised the proper, the only sane and possible policy, the policy of universal co-operation. He did his best. But he did not succeed in overcoming the distrust of conservative statesmen with regard to Russia's ultimate aims. His assistance was accepted by the West in the hours of need, accepted as a necessary evil. As soon, however, as there seemed to be a chance of coming to terms with Germany and Italy, he was thrown over by London and Paris, and as happened at Munich, Russia was isolated and excluded from the big European coalition. In the light of the events in Finland, the distrust of the conservative statesmen as to the Kremlin's real aims, seems more than justified. Her attack against a small and helpless neighbour is just as callous and brutal as Hitler's murderous acts of aggression. Perhaps Russia could have been deterred from this course by drawing her nearer to the West, and perhaps not. In any case Litvinov was not to be blamed. But Stalin did not care. Influenced by

the opponents of Litvinov's course, by the narrow-minded, nationalistic and realistic new men of Russia, who have been at work for long, he suddenly dropped the old pilot. Now, he thought, there was no time for ideals, for protracted negotiations and diplomatic niceties. The democratic powers were in a difficult position. He was going to put the screw on. They will have to give me what I want, and if not—well then. . . .

And for this purpose he needed a man who would obey, who would have no scruples in performing a volte face.

To understand Molotov's subsequent attitude during the negotiations with Britain and France, and his sudden and sensational signature of the Pact with the Nazis, we must recollect some of his previous utterances on foreign affairs. In a little pamphlet called "The October Revolution and the Struggle for Socialism," he says: "The struggle for the victory of socialism in Russia is linked up with the securing of peaceful conditions for our development and is consequently linked up with the struggle for peace. There is no need to prove that this struggle for peace for which the U.S.S.R. is steadily working is also in the interests of the whole international proletariate." Elsewhere we find the following words: "The Soviet Union has more than once shown and is showing to-day by its general international policy that the U.S.S.R. is the only true and is in fact the only consistent fighter for peace. This policy of struggle for

peace and for the exposure of all imperialist provocations for new wars, the Soviet Union regarded and regards to-day as one of its chief tasks. The Soviet Union is doing its utmost to consolidate peaceful relations with other countries." And finally Molotov speaks of Russia's "respect for international agreements, respect for the sovereign rights and the independence of other states and of her unconditional opposition to the policy of military occupation and intervention."

These words sound like irony, like a cynical jibe at human idealism, if one remembers how soon Molotov broke his own principles by waging a war of imperialistic aggression. But perhaps there is a clue to this inconsistency of his, for in the same pamphlet we read: "The ruling imperialist forces outside the U.S.S.R. will sooner or later attempt to organise a direct armed attack on the Soviet republic. We must reckon not only with inevitable imperialist wars but also with the inevitability of new provocation of military intervention in the U.S.S.R. to smash the Republic. We must not lose a day in preparing ourselves to resist their attacks. Capitalism does not mean to surrender without a fight. But we shall yet see how the old and decrepit capitalism, rotting to the core, will fare in these conflicts. The foundations of capitalism will not merely crumble. The capitalist world will crack from top to bottom."

Now he seems out to sponsor this "coming crack." In a blind fear of the Western democracies, in hatred and

distrust of capitalism, he joins the other big collectivist force in Europe—Nazi Germany, which in an equal distrust and hatred of the West has unloosened a flood of dirt, terror and blood upon Europe.

VII

WHAT BRITAIN WANTED

FROM the spring of 1939 onwards Britain sincerely and genuinely wished for collaboration with Russia. Whatever the tendencies in certain of her classes may have been before, Hitler's rape of Prague was the turning point. The Nazi dictator did not seem to see it. He could not understand that "a fuss" should be made about a broken word. It did not dawn upon him that he had committed what, in British eyes, amounted to one of the worst crimes. Absolutely convinced that Britain "had no business" to interfere with his dealings in the East of Europe, and that in fact she would not interfere, he turned his glare on to Poland. The next victim was chosen. He did not worry very much about the Anglo-Polish Agreement of Mutual Aid. By officially concentrating his demands on Danzig and the Corridor, which were described as former German territories in spite of the age long connections with Poland, he expected that those elements in Britain who used to exclaim: "Who would fight for Czechoslovakia?" would now be persuaded to say: "Why should we fight for Danzig and the Corridor?"

But as Mr. Winston Churchill then remarked, an

immense change had been wrought in British public opinion by Hitler's treacherous breach of the Munich Agreement, and the result was a complete reversal of policy in the British Government, and especially that of the Prime Minister. The denunciation of the German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact of 1934 appeared to every thinking Englishman as an extremely serious and menacing step. The German-Polish Agreement had enabled the Nazis to concentrate first upon the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, then upon the Anschluss with Austria and later on the rape of Czechoslovakia, with ruinous results to those unhappy countries. It disturbed relations between Paris and Warsaw, and shattered the solidarity among the States of Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea. But by 1939 it had served its purpose for Germany and was discarded in one of Hitler's notorious off-handed and one-sided actions.

This Nazi habit of illegally and faithlessly abolishing treaties without the assent of the other party, after having reaped all possible advantage from them had, in the words of Mr. Churchill, rarely taken a more brazen form. Hitler and his henchmen had completely destroyed Europe's faith in any agreement concluded with Nazi Germany, and the realisation was growing everywhere that this constant threat of aggression, this callous display of power politics must be stopped unless the whole continent was to be trampled under the military boot of Prussia. Britain and France had no direct quarrel with

the German people. Their interests had not been directly menaced. But the questions at issue between Berlin and the West were moral rather than geographical or territorial or economic. The Peace Block of nations, which Britain and France set out to build up in the spring of 1939, was formed not for selfish ends, not to encircle the German people or to rob them from their legitimate place in the sun, as was falsely alleged by the Nazi propagandists, but to resist further acts of aggression and thus to save the freedom and dignity of all the peoples—great and small.

But it was clear from the outset that to make the Peace Block effective Russian co-operation must be secured. It was astonishing how quickly and decisively opinion in Great Britain and France was consolidating itself upon a Triple Alliance with the Soviet. The old objections against Communism ceased to count with overwhelming numbers of people. Their dislike of Marxist doctrines remained the same as before. But they felt themselves strong enough to withstand their influence; moreover, what mattered above all was to gather sufficient forces capable of stopping those who had run amuck in the heart of Europe.

The idea behind it was, of course, to face the German aggressor from two sides. No one under-rated the military prowess of that European nightmare—the Nazi army. It had proved its terrific power frequently and tragically enough. But on the other hand this army was

not all powerful, and it was evident that the thrust of the hard-pressed German people was not capable of succeeding in many directions at the same time. Strategists were and are still convinced that the German military machine so newly reconstructed and in relatively inexperienced hands, would not be strong enough to bear the cumulative weight at the same moment of so many nations, and therefore much depended on enlisting the assistance of as many states as possible, great and small. It need not be stressed that no British or French statesman wanted the war. The history of the last few years contains sufficient proofs of their readiness to go a long way in the interests of peace. But it was only the prospect of a major war on both fronts, and the challenge of the peace-loving nations of Europe that constituted the best deterrent against further Nazi aggression.

To increase the proportion of the peoples prepared to resist Nazism, Britain and France endeavoured to find an ally in Russia. This attempt was due to the realisation of the real identity of interests which united the foreign policy of the three Great Powers. Their common interest —so it appeared in the spring and summer of 1939—was peace. Not one of them had anything to gain and all had much to lose by war. And though these reflections now seem ironical enough in view of Stalin's new policy of aggression, there was a genuine conviction in the summer of 1939 in Great Britain and elsewhere that the Triple Pact had solid foundations to be built upon.

For it was not only Britain and France who had reason to desire this Pact. Russian interests too were deeply involved. The arrival of the Nazi army and of a Nazi fleet on the Black Sea would have imperilled the very existence of the Soviet. A successful German push into the wheat lands of the Ukraine would have spelt doom for the whole of Russia. The eclipse of Poland's independence would have been a threat no less deadly to Moscow than to Paris. A Nazi invasion of the Baltic States or Finland would have forced the Russians to repeat their ancient wars for a outlet to the West." Therefore there was a real basis of equal, rightful interest existing in foreign policy between the Soviet and the democracies. The Triple Pact seemed not only necessary but also logical.

But M. Molotov was of a different opinion.

VIII

WHAT MOLOTOV DID

FROM the outset the negotiations about forming the Peace Front did not run too smoothly. We have seen that the idea of this Front was born immediately after Hitler's outrageous march into Prague. This happened on the 15th March, 1939. On the 18th of March, when the international situation had become still more menacing in view of Germany's open threats to Rumania, the British Ambassador, acting upon instructions from his government, visited the Kremlin and asked what the Soviet attitude to the newest developments would be. The U.S.S.R. then proposed a conference of Britain, France, Russia, Poland, Rumania and Turkey to devise means of resistance to further aggression. In the view of the British opposition acceptance of this very sound proposal would have led to the eventual signature of a Triple Pact and that there would have been no war, or if it had come to that, the result would have been Hitler's downfall. However that may be, this suggestion was declined by the British Government as premature. Instead, London asked whether Moscow would join Great Britain, France, and Poland in a common declaration

against aggression, envisaging immediate consultations between the four powers in case of any new act of aggression. The Russians agreed and suggested that to lend the greatest possible weight to the document the signatures of the Prime Ministers as well as those of the Foreign Secretaries of the four states should be affixed to the declarations. But the proposal was rendered abortive by the refusal of the Polish Government to consider collaboration with their Red neighbour. And since the British government did not wish to influence Poland in any way, the matter was allowed to rest.

On the 22nd of March, however, came a new shock: Hitler seized Memel, and it was obvious that Danzig was soon to follow. On the 31st of March, Mr. Chamberlain gave his famous guarantee to Poland, since in his own words "the matter was imminent. We did not know that Poland might not be invaded within a term which could be measured by hours and not by days." But only a few days later a new crisis shook Europe. It was on the 7th of April, Good Friday, that Mussolini occupied Albania, and Great Britain reacting to it as it has done to the menace of Poland, gave similar guarantees to Greece and Rumania on April the 13th. Unfortunately these guarantees were given in the greatest haste, without consulting the Soviet Union, whose collaboration was obviously essential if effective help was to be given to Poland and Rumania.

To fill the gap, Britain through her ambassador in

Moscow suggested that the Kremlin too should make a declaration in the form of a unilateral guarantee to both these states, thus complementing the British and French step. The Russians interpreted this suggestion as an invitation gratuitously to undertake to defend a country likely to be attacked in the near future. This naturally did not appeal to them, and that is why on April the 17th they made counter proposals offering the conclusion of a Triple Pact between England, France and the Soviet Union with the idea not merely to protect Poland and Rumania but to stop aggression anywhere. To that end they offered a pact of mutual assistance between the three great powers and a military alliance reinforcing the political treaty. But since the guarantee of only two of their border states amounted to a virtual invitation for Germany to attack the others, they demanded that Finland and the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), too, should be included into the guarantee scheme. "If we definitely come down on your side," they said, "and finally antagonise Germany, then we are likely to incur her direct hostility one day. The obvious place for her to strike at us will then be the Baltic region, for it is an open gap in the new defence system. It is essential for our security therefore that this gap should be closed."

Some time elapsed before the British government replied. It was on the 9th May that they sent an answer to Moscow which was a modified version of their original

proposals. But meantime a great change had occurred in Russia: Stalin had placed Molotov in charge of Foreign Affairs, and this astute politician quickly interpreted Britain's proposals as designed to leave it to London to decide when or whether the guarantee should come into operation. Apart from that he pointed out scornfully that the British government had "said nothing about any assistance which the Soviet Union should receive from France and Britain on the basis of reciprocity, if Moscow were drawn into war in fulfilment of her guarantees." And since it seemed obvious to the Russians that in the event of a German act of aggression against Poland, the brunt of the task of resisting it would fall upon themselves, Molotov flatly refused to consider a one-sided agreement. Ridden by his suspicion that the capitalistic democracies would not mind seeing Russia engaged in a clash with Germany, he made it clear on May 14th that if resistance to aggression was genuinely intended it was essential to have a hard and fast agreement between the three Great Powers along the lines of Russia's proposals of April 17th.

By the end of May the British and French governments had overcome their original reluctance to make this hard and fast agreement with the Soviet. Public opinion in the two allied countries grew increasingly outspoken in demanding this agreement, and on May 27th Lord Chilston and Mr. Naggiar notified the Kremlin that their governments had agreed to discuss the Triple Pact.

This meant that London and Paris now recognised the principle of reciprocity, which Molotov admitted to be "a step forward," but in his speech to the Supreme Council of the Soviet he added: "It should be noted, however, that it is hedged around by such reservations—even to the extent of a reservation regarding certain clauses of the League Covenant—that it may prove to be a fictitious step forward." And again ridden by his fears, he protested in his familiar vein: "We must therefore be vigilant. We stand for peace (!) and for preventing the further development of aggression. But we must remember Comrade Stalin's advice to be cautious and not allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them."

Faced by this suspicion on the part of the Russians, Britain and France made an important advance. The suggestions of introducing the machinery of the League of Nations were dropped. The conversations were tackled in earnest. Still not convinced, the Russians suggested that Lord Halifax, the British Foreign Secretary, or another responsible Minister should come to Moscow to continue the negotiations personally. Judging by the tone of this invitation, Lord Halifax would have found a friendly welcome in Russia, and the critics of the British Government assert that if he had accepted it, the negotiations would probably have succeeded. However that may be, Lord Halifax did not go to Moscow,

but he sent Mr. Strang, who had a good knowledge of the U.S.S.R. and who from June 14th onwards assisted in the conversations.

But Mr. Strang was not in a position to improve matters to any great extent. He had no particular authority and had constantly to ask the London Foreign Office for new instructions. Moreover, as Mr. Lloyd George pointed out, "Mr. Chamberlain negotiated directly with Hitler. He went to Germany to see him. He and Lord Halifax made visits to Rome. But whom have they sent to Russia? They have not sent even the lowest rank of a Cabinet Minister—they have sent a clerk in the Foreign Office. It is an insult." The somewhat painful impression which this differentiation must have caused in Moscow was, however, bettered when on the 25th of July the British government accepted the Russian suggestion that English and French military missions should go over to discuss a military alliance. The political negotiations had dragged on for weeks, struggling with difficulties and unable to come to a satisfactory arrangement. Meantime the international situation grew rapidly worse, but it was hoped that an agreement in the military field would pave the way to a political understanding. The British and French military delegations arrived in Moscow on the 11th August, but they too consisted only of comparatively minor officials, who had no authority to sign an agreement, and, moreover, Mr. Strang was called back to London. Things definitely did not go well.

It is obvious that the causes of the trouble were deep divergencies of view between Britain and France on the one hand, and between Russia on the other. These divergencies were connected with the attitude of the states, whose integrity was to be guaranteed. The Soviet representatives pointed out in the course of the discussions that, as Russia had no common frontier with Germany, it would be essential if they were to render military assistance to Poland, to be allowed to send their troops across Polish territory in order to make contact with the enemy. Britain and France undertook to communicate this point of view to Warsaw, but the Polish answer was that they did not require such Soviet help and would not accept it. The rub was that the Poles who had fought the Communists in 1919/20 and who had ever since taken an extremely hostile attitude to Russia, were afraid that the Soviet troops once in their country would never leave it again.

The ruling classes in Poland, extremely nationalistic and reactionary, no doubt blundered seriously in preserving for years an attitude of hostility towards Moscow. These circles, the nobility, the clergy and the army, to whose arrogant representatives Marshal Smygly-Rydz and Col. Beck, the former Foreign Minister, belonged, had become a sort of permanent anti-communist centre, which created a well-founded anxiety in Moscow. There were times when Poland, under the influence of international events, inclined towards a certain form of co-

operation with Moscow, but on the whole there was a sort of mental Maginot line on her Eastern frontier, and every opportunity of allying themselves with the opposing camp was eagerly grasped. Thus Beck in 1934 concluded his notorious Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler, after which Poland, in spite of her policy of sitting on the fence between Berlin and Moscow, had frequently made it plain where her real sympathies lay. This naturally forced the Soviet to a watchfulness bordering on hostility, which in its turn increased Polish suspicions.

There was no way out from this vicious circle of mutual hatred, not even when Hitler began to menace Poland and wisdom should have taught her ruling classes that her only salvation lay in an attempt at friendly collaboration with Moscow in addition to the contacts with Britain and France. Now that the Soviet have stabbed her in the back in the very moment when she had been pressed by Germany, the Poles are, of course, justified in saying that they were right in distrusting Russia, for she would have acted in precisely the same way even if her help had been enlisted. But this has still to be proved, and besides it was the height of folly to refuse a help, when their own resources and preparations have proved to be so tragically inadequate. Moreover, whatever intentions the Russians really had, they would have at least assisted the Poles in keeping the Germans out. But blinded by ideological and nationalistic hatred, Messrs. Beck and Smygly-Rydz refused this assistance, and

Britain and France did not see a possibility of influencing them.

The other stumbling block that prevented the conclusion of the Triple Alliance was the question of Finland and the Baltic States. Finland had been an autonomous Duchy under the sovereignty of the Tsar until the end of the Great War. The Baltic States—Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia had belonged to Russia for over two centuries. Their excellent ports, commercial as well as military, were Russia's "windows to the West." After 1918 the four little countries gained complete independence, which was also solemnly recognised by the Soviet. The Baltic States placed their ports at the disposal of Russian exporters and importers, commercial treaties were concluded, and all went well, until Hitler assumed power in Germany.

His programme of conquest in the East and his dream of "colonising" the Baltic States caused a stir not only in Riga, Kaunas and Tallinn, but also in Moscow. As long as the three little border states were free and not under a hostile influence, the Russians could accept their independence, particularly in view of the trading facilities they enjoyed in the Baltic ports. But things changed when Hitler began to increase his pressure in the Baltic and to convert it into an eventual jumping-off ground for an invasion of Russia.

In Finland the situation was still more complicated. Like Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, she too had no

other wish but to enjoy peacefully her freedom. But with the memories of the bloody civil war in 1918, the majority of the Finns preserved a strong anti-Russian sentiment. This sentiment, shared by the students, the clergy and the officers, reached its peak during the big Fascist revolt of 1930–32, which caused great anxiety in Russia on account of its connections with the Nazis and Polish, Austrian and Italian reactionaries. The revolt was eventually quelled, but certain leading Finnish circles persisted in their attitude, so that the Soviet had to be cautious. It is obvious that small and peaceful Finland did not threaten the big U.S.S.R. In fact her people, who belong to the most progressive nations in Europe, had the sincere desire to live in peace with the big neighbour. But Moscow was anxious lest Germany, who until the present war, held the first place in the affections of the Finns, should one day obtain a foothold in Finland and thus be able to strike at Leningrad, Kronstad, the only Russian naval base in the Baltic, and the surrounding industrial district.

When German aggression had finished off Austria and Czechoslovakia and approached the gates of Poland, it was obvious that the Baltic States and Finland, too, would one day be doomed. The Russians had to find ways and means to avoid this menace. Their big opportunity came, when Britain and France proposed the establishment of the Peace Front. As we have seen, Moscow immediately demanded that the four small countries at

the Baltic sea should be included in the general guarantee. But not satisfied with this, they desired also a guarantee against so-called "indirect aggression." This meant that they reserved the right for themselves to interfere in the internal affairs of Latvia, Estonia and Finland at any given moment if their interests were threatened, not only by open aggression but also by internal upheavals.

The Baltic States and Finland at once protested against these guarantees. They were partly induced to this step by Germany, whose pressure after Munich they were not in a position to withstand. Germany desired nothing but to break the British-made Peace Front, and it was easy for her to force the four small states into obedience by simply pointing to the destiny of Czechoslovakia and Austria. On the other hand, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania objected to the guarantee scheme also on their own account. With the lesson of history fresh in their minds, they feared that Russia, anxious to forestall Germany, might be induced to misuse the liberties given her under the guarantees for her own selfish ends. A pretext for invading the four states and establishing Soviet control there would be easy to find.

The latest events have shown that the anxieties of the small nations were well founded. As British official spokesmen admitted recently, Russia in fact demanded under the guarantee scheme no less than a free hand in Poland, the Baltic States and Finland. Stalin and his Molotov were out to snatch away from Germany these

fat morsels and to get back the territory the Tsars before them had possessed. Strategic, economic and political needs, they said, came before ethics and ideals,—and all attempts on the part of the British to wring concessions from them proved futile.

Had the Poles, the Finns, the Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians agreed to accept a Soviet guarantee (this might or might not have altered their present destiny), the position of Britain would have been different. But it was obviously impossible for the British and French governments to set out on a crusade for the liberation of the small peoples of Europe and at the same time to hand over four or five of them to a militant great power. It was plain enough that to say "No" to Molotov would mean the end of the Peace Front as originally envisaged. It was also plain that this might open up new and dangerous possibilities for the Soviet. But Molotov, astute, cool and callous, had shown his cards. He did not mean to change his tactics. And honour prevented the British and the French from accepting his terms.

Molotov was not sorry—he had something else up his sleeve.

IX

SOVIET–NAZI DUET

On Tuesday, August the 22nd, 1939, the biggest political sensation since 1914 shook the world like a bombshell: Germany and Russia had concluded a Non-Aggression Treaty. Rumours that such a thing might happen, in spite of the abyss that seemed to divide the Kremlin from Berchtesgaden, had been current for some time. But that it should happen in reality and moreover at a time when the whole of Europe (Germany included) expected the signature of the Triple Pact, was almost unbelievable. It was a calamity fraught with sinister sequences.

Those well-versed in international politics knew, of course, that the Soviet, whilst negotiating with Britain and France, were engaged in parallel discussions with the Nazis. It seems even that these two distinct operations proceeded under the same roof, though on different floors. It is not quite certain when this double-dealing began. Some observers think that the Germans approached the Russians as early as March or April, 1939, others speak of July or August. However that may be, the fact is that in the second half of August Molotov had

his German Treaty in his pocket. When it was officially announced, public opinion in Britain and France was shocked and disappointed, for the Triple Pact was regarded essential. The Soviet were violently accused of betrayal and double-crossing, and those who had always opposed a rapprochement with Russia triumphed.

Well, though it was no betrayal (for the Soviet Union was then not yet pledged to anyone and had still her freedom of action), it was certainly an act of double-crossing. But that need surprise no one. It is after all in the nature of politics for statesmen to work in the interests of their own countries. It should not be forgotten that Mr. Chamberlain was up to the last minute before the outbreak of the present war in direct and indirect contact with Hitler, and had a satisfactory agreement between London and Berlin been possible, there is not the least doubt that the Prime Minister would have accepted it. It would be equally naive to accuse the Soviet for their clandestine tactics, for as Mr. Pritt, M.P., points out, no one can expect of shrewd politicians (and the gentlemen in the Kremlin *are* shrewd politicians) that "in the true sense of English cricket, the U.S.S.R. should have ostensibly broken off negotiations with Britain and France and then turned to Germany and said: I find I cannot make an agreement with your enemies. You need not fear any such agreement, and I can no longer offer you any inducement to persuade you to abandon your anti-Bolshevik campaign

and make a Non-Aggression pact with me. Would you, dear enemy, nevertheless like to do so ? ". No, Moscow tested its chances simultaneously with both sides. A man like Litvinov would probably have done his utmost (if allowed) to reach an agreement with the West. But Molotov was different. He had stated his price, and when Britain and France refused, he made the bargain with the " model diplomat " Ribbentrop, whom no moral scruples prevented from giving away what did not belong to him.

Thus there is some logic in the Russian attitude, grim and appalling though it may be. Hitler's action on the other hand seemed less comprehensible at first. There have long existed people in this country and elsewhere who have attempted to ignore or even defend the abominations of the Nazi regime by maintaining that it was better than Bolshevism. And when Hitler first obtained power by terror, fraud and cunning, some of his admirers sincerely believed that he had delivered Europe from the Red menace. There were many, even a short time ago, who still believed that he was a man of ideological principles and that however stupid his race theory may be, however disgraceful and wanton his anti-Semitism, however primitive and low his political theories, he nevertheless sincerely held the opinions which he so frequently expressed. But what a shock for these optimists when this same Führer at a moment's notice, in order to fulfil another of his regular fits of destruction, allied himself closely to the one State in Europe which housed and

supported the Comintern, supposed to be the object of Hitler's " crusade " !

The shock would have been less crude, if these observers had discovered earlier the fundamental fact that Nazi Germany's financial and economic systems and also her social structure were rapidly approximating those of Russia. The general European public had paid very little attention to this development, and yet even some time ago Dr. Hermann Rauschning wrote in his book, *The Revolution of Destruction*, which was based on his great theoretical knowledge and practical experience in Nazi Germany, that National Socialism and National Bolshevism (into which Stalin and his group had transformed Leninism) are identical. He foresaw the prospects of a German-Russian alliance and pointed out that, though Hitler had an aversion against the Kremlin because he thought that some of the rulers of Russia were Jews, that alliance was inevitable, for it meant " simply the confluence of two streams which ran into the same sea, the sea of world revolution. . . . It will be no ordinary coalition between two powers for normal purposes. Germany and Russia, if they come together, will radically transform the world."

Mr. Duff Cooper, too, has declared more than once that " there is no fundamental difference between the creeds of Moscow and Berlin." In September 1939, shortly after the announcement of the Soviet-Nazi Pact, he wrote: " These two breeds of Bolshevism are fundamentally akin.

Both are historically revolutionary, both are admittedly socialistic, both seek to break away from the ties with the past, to abolish all class distinctions, to destroy all old traditions and both are bitterly anti-Christian. (That is why the Stalinists have much more in common with the Hitlerites than with the democratic, liberal, individualistic British and French.—THE AUTHOR.)

"Where they differ, the Russian brand is indeed the less ignoble of the two, the German is the more efficient. The Communism of Karl Marx does in theory aim at international peace and goodwill. It envisages a world in which all men shall be equal both in status and in wealth and in which all nations shall be friends. No such dreams haunt the baser imagination of the Nazi. He, while rejecting Christianity, has returned to the primitive tribal paganism of his barbarous ancestors. He has no faith in humanity, but only in a particular branch of it, out of which he has created an idol, unknown to ethnical science, whom he calls the Nordic man and whom he worships.

"The higher ideals of Communism will not work, and the Bolsheviks of Moscow have long abandoned them. It is not easy to make men work for the love of working, without hope of gain, and the Russians were never experts in organisation. The lower ideals of Nazism, however, work admirably, because it is not difficult to persuade a man that he belongs to a superior race and that therefore he is justified in persecuting and robbing a powerless

minority—and the Germans have always shown themselves efficient in the minor arts of administration. In small matters they are invariably first rate.

"The two revolutions have followed similar paths. Both have indulged in a blood-bath at the expense of the original leaders. Trotzky, the right-hand man of Lenin, got away,—Roehm, the right-hand man of Hitler, was murdered—almost before the eyes of his master. Stalin seeks to pretend that he is the authentic heir of Lenin (He used the cult of Lenin's body against me, Trotzky complained in one of his recent fighting books.—AUTHOR), and Hitler whose hands are deeply dyed not only with the blood of the innocent, but also with that of his own intimate and vile associates, is still regarded by the submissive multitudes of enslaved Germans as the true prophet of the new religion.

"The Russians have hitherto been more ruthless. They have in theory abolished all private property and openly attacked religion. They have massacred on a large scale and put to death the creators of their state and their existing military forces. The Germans have so far proved timid imitators of their great Russian exemplar. They have stolen all the private property of the Jews and are gradually acquiring that of others as they need it. They have made a concordat with the Pope, every clause of which they have broken. They have imprisoned the noblest of their Protestant clergymen, but they have founded a new sect of 'German Christians,' which is

pastored by time-serving, lick spittle sycophants and which is loathed and despised by Catholic and Protestant alike. They have dismissed their most distinguished generals, but they have not killed them. (Gen. von Fritsch has been buried in the meantime.—AUTHOR.) And they have preferred the slow torture of the concentration camp to the massacre of their Russian allies.

"Only in external aggression did it appear that the Nazis could claim credit for more gigantic crimes. The Bolsheviks have now hastened to become accessories in the biggest murder of a nation since the Nazis' predecessors launched war on Belgium in 1914. The Powers of Evil are now united. National Socialism and National Bolshevism are at one. The two governments that base their systems upon robbery, torture, murder and fraud are marching together."

Indeed, the Soviet–Nazi Duet could not be more complete.

X

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

THE Russian-German co-operation, sealed by Molotov and Ribbentrop on August the 21st, 1939, is not only based on an identity of outlook, methods and interest, it is a repetition of history.

A few days after the signature of the Non-Aggression Pact with Moscow, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, no doubt to reconcile its readers with Hitler's amazing *volte face*, reminded them that this was merely a renewal of an ancient mutual friendship. Goering's mouthpiece—the *Essener National-Zeitung*—pointed out that already the great Chancellor Bismark had striven for collaboration with Russia, and that the memory of his policy had been so strong in post-war Germany, that the Weimar Republic had regarded the continuation of this collaboration as the highest political wisdom. The army in particular had ranked among the foremost advocates of the resumption of this policy. These considerations voiced in the German press found a vivid echo in the Soviet Union. And though the *Pravda* took great pains to stress the difference of ideologies guiding the two states, it stated that these differences must not prevent

the resumption of their previous mutual contacts. The new pact was nothing but a continuation of the famous treaty of Rapallo signed in 1922.

This treaty was no less an international sensation than its "child" seventeen years later. Looking back to that time, we remember April and May 1922 in Genoa, where the statesmen of Europe had assembled. Russian and German delegates were also present. It was for the first time since the war that former friends and enemies had met on such a great forum. The Conference had a big programme: the recognition of the Soviet, repayment of war debts, credit problems and the general stabilisation of Europe. The Soviet clearly desired to establish contacts with the rest of the world. "The most burning political problem of the day is Genoa," said Lenin in this connection, "we are going to Genoa not as Communists, but as merchants. We want to trade and they want to trade. We want to make profits and they want to make profits. The issue of the struggle will depend, although in a small degree, on the skill of our diplomats."

But the outlook for the Genoa conference was never too bright. Germany and Russia had no right to speak as absolutely equal partners, for the former was crushed by the weight of reparation debts, the latter, weakened by war and revolution, was somehow regarded as a pariah. The representatives of the victorious powers willy nilly assumed the role of guardians. And in spite of Lenin's conciliatory intentions, the general attitude of

the Soviet delegation was such as to make an agreement between them and Western Powers extremely difficult. As in the summer of 1939 the negotiations dragged on—until a startled world learned that the Russians and the Germans—two big and strong outcasts—had secretly come to terms with each other.

Their first pact was signed by Rathenau and Tshitcherin on April the 16th, 1922, in the small city of Rapallo. It envisaged mutual diplomatic recognition, the grant of the most favoured nation clause in their trade and an agreement to renounce the claim for damages brought about by their respective troops on each other's territory during the Great War. It contained nothing extraordinary and really sensational, as we see, and yet Europe was deeply alarmed, for the rapprochement between Berlin and Moscow fundamentally disturbed the balance of power established after Versailles. The representatives of the Great Powers assembled in Genoa, immediately protested against the new treaty to the German delegation. An official protest was lodged by the French government in Berlin. The general view was that the Pact of Rapallo had increased the chances of a new war. These anxieties, felt for similar reasons seventeen years later, were proved to be justified.

The Western powers immediately sought to counteract it. Britain attempted to bridge the gulf dividing the West from Germany by a conciliatory attitude. The Dawes plan in 1924 was aimed at easing Germany's

burden with regard to reparation payments. In the same year, Britain and France offered diplomatic recognition to the government of the U.S.S.R. In 1925 Sir Austen Chamberlain, M. Aristide Briand and Dr. Gustav Stresemann, three of the greatest statesmen Europe had known after the War, built up the Locarno Treaty, which not only drew the Reich nearer to the West and decontaminated the poisonous atmosphere of mutual hatred and distrust, but inaugurated a short, but really happy era in international relations. It was in this happy atmosphere that Germany in 1926 was invited, and accepted, to join the League of Nations.

But in spite of this the Western Powers in the same year received a new shock. The Germans and the Russians signed a treaty in Berlin. It was meant as an extension of the Pact of Rapallo and envisaged not only a promise of neutrality in case of unprovoked aggression on each of the partners by a third power, but also a promise never to revert to economic sanctions against each other. This Treaty was renewed in 1933, and supplemented by various extensive commercial agreements. Moreover, the closest possible contacts were established between the German and the Russian armies. Since the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles prevented Germany from developing and increasing her military strength, officers from the Reich trained Russian units, and the newest German military inventions were tried out, utilised and built up in Russia. Both parties

profited by this arrangement. The Germans had a large share in building up the material strength of the Union. The Reich on the other hand had found an ideal playground for its old favoured game with soldiers, and a safe place where, far away from the supervising eyes of Britain and France, she could try out in all secrecy some new and handsome means of aggression. If one remembers that, in addition to all this, there was a constant exchange of Russian raw materials for German industrial products and finished goods, it becomes obvious that the two partners had good cause for satisfaction.

But Hitler's advent to power made an abrupt end to these mutually beneficent relations. It is difficult to say with certainty whether his crazy campaign against Russia was based on the shrewd reflection that this would not only make him *persona grata* with the Western Powers, but enable him to build up his military and strategic resources for the eventual blow against them without incurring any serious interference on their part—or whether he then was sincere in his hatred of Communism and in his desire to " colonise " the fertile regions of the Ukraine. It is most likely that he was unconsciously prompted by both these motives at the same time, leaving ultimate issues, like the decision whom to fight first, for the future. Opportunist that he was, he knew that at the given moment he would do what appeared to him the right thing. Thus he inaugurated a crusade of hatred, vilifications and threats against the Kremlin and

created, together with his useful Herr von Ribbentrop, the Anti-Comintern Pact. This crusade had immediate results. Trade between Germany and Russia dropped catastrophically, and to Hitler's abusive language the Soviet replied in kind. The honours of these duels undoubtedly went to the Ukrainian Premier, M. Luchenko, who not only personally promised the Führer a good thrashing, but was officially allowed by Stalin to coin the following classic phrase: "A pig cannot see the sky, and Adolf Hitler shall not see our garden of Ukraine."

And yet, when political interests required it, all this blossoming antagonism was forgotten, wiped out, and overnight both parties remembered that by tradition and what not they actually were great friends. However, it would be wrong to imagine that agreement was reached so quickly. There was a good amount of bargaining, of hesitation, stoppage and resumption preceding it. An observer who closely watched German-Russian negotiations during 1924 recently told some amusing details how these negotiations were carried out. And it is safe to assume that the Russian attitude to international discussions has not changed.

The talks in question were destined to implement and conclude discussions about a trade treaty initiated the year before in Berlin. They were to prove whether the Pact of Rapallo had any real value, and on their successful conclusion depended the future of German-Russian collaboration. Moscow attributed the greatest importance to it, and the arrival of the Germans was hailed as a great political event. The Germans tackled the problem with their inborn national thoroughness. The chief negotiators were accompanied by a huge delegation of experts and specialists with wagon-loads of carefully drafted, exquisitely worded documents. There was a great first meeting at the Kremlin, but how shocked were the Germans, when they soon found that the Russians had prepared absolutely nothing. What was left to them but to hand over to their Russian partners the draft of the future treaty. It was a masterpiece of foresight with endless paragraphs, sub-paragraphs, etc., and coloured by typical Teutonic greed. Their demands were absolutely astounding. The Russians, on the other hand, had at their disposal only a thin file with some general documents. There was no question of a draft. Their counter-proposals had to be drawn up at lightning's speed, and in addition the chief of the Soviet delegation, who had only recently returned from a diplomatic post, openly admitted that economic treaties were not within his competence.

A beginning was made at last by forming a number of commissions. Each Soviet department had to give its opinion on the various points raised by the Germans. For this task two weeks were allotted, in the course of which the negotiators idled. When the talks were resumed, the Russians proceeded to submit the German proposals to a devastating fire of criticism. The atmosphere at once became charged with ill-feeling. The negotiations were adjourned.

When they were resumed again, the departments had by now also formulated their own demands. These were based on one and the same principle: to demand everything but to give nothing. In addition each of the departments concerned had only its own interests in view, so that there were wide divergencies even within the Russian proposals themselves. The next task therefore was to co-ordinate the separate demands, and the chief of the Russian delegation had to go personally from one commissar to another in order to weld the proposals into one harmonious whole. But even the commissars's directions were contradictory and refused to fit into the framework of an international treaty. Moreover, they were far from meeting the German point of view.

Mutual irritation increased. After two months there was such an abundance of material that even the specialists were completely lost in a sea of paper, vainly struggling to find a way out. And the more they tried, the bigger grew the gulf between the maximum and minimum demands of the partners. To cut the matter short,—the conversations lasted a whole year. They were only finished when Stalin for political reasons decided to sign the treaty. He completely disregarded the observations of the departments, specialists and negotiators and merely ordered curtly his officials to reach the necessary compromise and to conclude the matter within a fortnight. This order was promptly complied with.

Another similar incident occurred in 1928, though it ended differently. There was again a German delegation

in Moscow to negotiate an important agreement. As usual the Russians made some sort of difficulties, and the Germans got impatient. One day, it was on the 20th December, the Head of the Reich-delegation announced that he was unable to wait any longer, that the German delegation desired to be home for Christmas, that there could be no further compromises and the whole staff was leaving Moscow the same evening. This announcement had the effect of an alarm-signal. The chief of the Russian delegation went from commissar to commissar and brought one new draft treaty after another. But the Germans refused to bargain. At one hour before the departure of the delegation, the chief Russian negotiator was instructed by his government to sign. A mad activity shook the ministry. Negotiators, specialists, officials were all electrified. The train due for Berlin was ordered to wait an hour longer, the treaty was signed, there was a great send off at the station, and the Germans left the same evening—beaming. Political interest had proved to be stronger than all other considerations.

This is how it must have been also in August 1939. When the Russians saw that their demands were not accepted, they suddenly grasped the hand of the Germans. And that is how Molotov in his big speech to the Supreme Council of the Soviet on August the 31st, 1939, was able to announce that "Conditions being what they are, it is difficult to over-estimate the international importance of the Soviet-German Pact. It marks a turning-point in the history of Europe, and not of Europe alone."

XI

"BENEFITS" OF SOVIET-NAZI COLLABORATION

In the same speech in which he defended the signature of the pact with Germany before the bewildered peoples of the U.S.S.R., Molotov added: "This Pact proves that no important questions on international relations, and still less questions concerning Eastern Europe, can be settled without the active participation of the Soviet Union; that any attempts to shut out the Soviet Union . . . are doomed to failure."

These words are a clue to the motives that prompted the Russians to sign the Treaty with the Nazis. It was with growing anxiety and resentment that Moscow had for years watched the attempts made by the Western Powers, Italy and Germany to relegate them into the background of European affairs, to shut them out from Europe and even to combine against them. They had been separated from the continent by a *cordon sanitaire* of smaller buffer states, which like Poland or Finland were supposed to keep them back. That is why the particular attention of the Kremlin was directed at these smaller states. To get a foothold there would mean to advance into Europe, to come into direct and constant touch with

the Baltic sea, in short to break open a window to the West—the old urge of the Russians. For that reason they demanded from Britain and France a free hand in Poland, the Baltic States and Finland. They were rebuked. But when the Nazis, who had to have Russian agreement if their intended war on Poland was to succeed, came to terms with Moscow, it meant that the latter's claims were fully recognised, and Molotov was justified in declaring that in Eastern Europe Russia now had her say.

But it seems in the light of the last tragic events that more was arranged. Many observers fear that the Russian-German Union is a close one and that its effects are likely to be far-reaching. However that may be, enough has happened already to shock the world. Russia, whose slogan had been for years, "resistance to aggression," has joined the ranks of those Great Powers which did not hesitate to bully, to threaten and to attack with full armed might the small and defenceless states. It is not so long ago that Stalin said to the American journalist Roy Howard: "The idea of exporting a revolution is nonsense. If a country wants revolution, it will provide its own revolution. And if it does not there will be none." And on another occasion his faithful Molotov declared: "We do not want an inch of foreign land!" These two announcements were intended as definite disclaimers of unfriendly intentions towards Europe ascribed to the Soviet in various quarters. They were a solemn promise that the Kremlin would neither support com-

munist activities in foreign countries nor wage imperialistic wars on them. And yet how soon were these promises belied by the Russian activities in Poland and Finland.

The invasion of Poland was the prelude. On Sunday, September 17th, when the German army was already deep in Poland and that unfortunate nation was enlisting her last resources for defence, she was stabbed in the back by Soviet forces, which came surging up from the East. It is possible that the Russians would not have committed this act of unprovoked aggression, if the Germans had had greater difficulties in occupying Poland. As it was, the latter's army surged forward like a destructive flood, taking one town after another, breaking front-lines and shattering fortresses in spite of the heroic resistance of the Polish people. Already half of Poland was under the Nazi heel, but their army continued the drive eastward, rapidly approaching the Soviet border.

This was the moment when the Russian bear stirred. The Red army crossed the frontier at various points and marched westward, crushing opposition where it was offered. But there was not much opposition. Let down by shortsighted and irresponsible leaders like the men round Marshal Smygly-Rydz, the Polish nation was caught in a trap. Meantime the two invading armies met, and it was a piquant sight when the Red and Brown soldiers exchanged friendly greetings. Russian and German officers sat down amicably at a green table and

proceeded to carve up among themselves a foreign country, which had every right to be independent. Thereby the Russians were sensible enough to take considerably more than pleased the Germans. But Stalin wanted to get back almost the whole part of Poland which had been under Russian domination before and in addition he very cleverly occupied some territory which cut the Germans off the main route to Rumania and the Black Sea. Hitler, having tied himself up with the Soviet, could not say a word.

By the end of September the whole operation was complete. The indomitable Ribbentrop flew to Moscow on the 27th, shook hands again with the man against whom only a short while ago he had proclaimed a world crusade and finally fixed the new Soviet-German frontier. Gleefully the Russians celebrated their victory. Defending this victory before the people, Molotov announced that they had had to act in order to protect their interests. It is true that the Soviet could not look on idly as the Germans approached their frontier. But Molotov forgot that it was his pact with Ribbentrop that opened the floodgates to the German invasion.

But this Pact went further than Poland. The Kremlin having obtained the part of Poland inhabited by White Russians and Ukrainians, also insisted that the Baltic States, which formerly were Russian, should now strategically and politically become an exclusive sphere of Russian interest. The Germans, unable to say No to

Stalin, agreed and even acceeded to his request to withdraw the Nazi minorities from the three small republics, thus depriving them of any pretext for future intervention.

Having carried their point, the Russians by the end of September began to concentrate troops on the Baltic frontier and then "invited" the Estonian Foreign Minister to Moscow. There he was presented with a demand for the lease of an Estonian port, some big Estonian islands in the Baltic Sea which had great strategic importance for the defence of Leningrad and of a few aerodromes. Faced with a threat of aggression, small Estonia had to give in. Having dealt with Estonia, Molotov proceeded to "protect Russian interests" in Latvia and Lithuania. The Latvian and Lithuanian Foreign Ministers were summoned to Moscow, too, and the Russians obtained from the Latvians the lease of two ports, a few aerodromes and some limited territory to station garrisons. The Lithuanians had no port to lease, for only half a year earlier the Germans had taken away their only outlet to the sea—Memel. But they, too, granted the Russians the right to use some of their airports and to station troops on certain points. The whole operation was settled by diplomatic means, and the short tension which marked these discussions soon diminished.

Thanks to the right to use Baltic naval bases and airports, and to station Red troops in certain specified districts as well as to the military alliances which the

three small states were induced to sign with Russia, the Kremlin has now established a virtual control over Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. There was no assistance to be expected from anywhere, and unable to withstand singlehanded an onslaught by the Russian bear, they gave in. Their consolation is that their independence is officially recognised and that they have not been dragged into a hopeless war. On the other hand Russia has considerably increased her strategic position and striking power in the event of a possible later conflict with Germany.

The diplomatic drive which Stalin began in Poland and the Baltic States was soon continued in Finland. But since it did not go off so smoothly, the Soviet, forgetting their beautiful ideals of "peace, respect for the sovereign rights of other countries and the safety of the toilers," waged war on the Finnish people, thus adding to the appalling chaos in international affairs, which for years has held Europe in its grasp. On October the 7th, M. Molotov invited a Finnish spokesman to Moscow. To stress the fact that they were equal partners the Finns did not send their Foreign Minister, but a large delegation headed by the senior statesman Paasikivi, who had a superior knowledge of Russia and had already once negotiated an important peace treaty with Moscow.

Paasikivi arrived in Moscow on the 10th of October. The demands presented to him were: the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance like those concluded with the

Baltic States, an exchange of Finnish territory near Leningrad for some territory in Karelia, which runs along the North-Eastern frontier of Finland, the cession or lease of some Finnish strategic islands dominating Leningrad, the lease of Finland's only Arctic port of Petsamo, with its important nickel mines in the neighbourhood, and the cession of the port of Hangö in the south-western corner of Finland. These demands stunned the Finns. It was understandable that Russia should be concerned with the defences of Leningrad, and the Finns were willing to meet her on this point. They were equally prepared to accede in the interests of peace to most of the other requests, but refused to hand over Petsamo, Hangö and the Mannerheim Line, the possession of which would have enabled the Russians to take the Finns into their pincers.

Weeks of hard bargaining ensued. Paasikivi, the Minister of Finance, M. Tanner and the rest of the delegation visited Moscow three times. Agreement was reached on two-thirds of the agenda; only on the most vital points, upon which their very independence was at stake, the Finns remained adamant. Supported by Scandinavia and encouraged by the moral support of the United States of America, the heroic little nation, though going to the limits of conciliation, was firmly prepared to defend their independence. And since the Russians, apart on the question of the military alliance and the control of the Aaland Islands, did not move an inch from their positions, the result was a deadlock.

Following the best Nazi tactics, the Kremlin now began to stir up a tremendous wave of propaganda against Finland. It was absurdly asserted that Finland had been transformed into an armed camp, whose 300,000 soldiers were preparing to attack the huge army of the Russians,—that the Finnish troop concentrations on the frontier were a threat to Russia and that her provocations could no longer be endured. Then the Russians renewed their claims, this time arranging for factory meetings and popular resolutions "demanding" action. When the ground was thus prepared, a frontier incident was staged. The demand to withdraw the troops from the frontier followed, accompanied by an ultimatum. When Finland declined, the old Non-Aggression Treaty with Helsingfors was cancelled. America tried to intervene at the last moment by offering mediation. This intervention was refused. And on November the 30th, without warning or a formal declaration, the "government of the toilers" began a murderous war on the toilers of Finland.

The war lasted three and a half months. The Finns fought with legendary heroism, but their victories were fruitless. It had been obvious from the outset that without material help from abroad Finland would not be able to withstand the Russians, vastly superior to her in men power and resources. When help did not come (an Anglo-French Expeditionary Force was not allowed to pass Norwegian and Swedish territory) the Finns had to

give in. The Peace Treaty under which the Soviet did not hesitate to take much more than they had demanded originally—they got the whole of the Karelian Isthmus and the Northern shore of the Lake Ladoga—was signed on Wednesday, March 13th. And though Finland has at least managed to save her independence, she is now at the mercy of Russia.

Aggression has paid again.

Thus Stalin and Molotov have joined Hitler and Ribbentrop not only in word, but also in deed. How far their understanding will lead, no one can tell. When Molotov and Ribbentrop met in Moscow for the second time, veiled threats were uttered against the Western Powers and those who supported them. At the present time it seems that not only the Germans, but also the Russians regard Britain and France as enemies. But far from being impressed, London and Paris calmly and confidently accepted the challenge. . . .