

THREE YEARS IN MOSCOW - STALIN'S RUSSIA THROUGH AUSTRALIAN EYES



Joseph Alexander (1892–1983, on the photo above) was the head of Australian Legation in Moscow in 1944-1947. He saw Russia during the last months of the WWII and witnessed the outbreak of the Cold War. His view of Soviet Russia is very controversial - he admired the Russian war effort, Russian culture, people of its lower classes but also developed very strong antipathy if not hatred towards Communism, Soviet political system and the top and brass of the Soviet society - its officialdom. It did not take him long to discover an abyss between the two main classes of the Soviet society and he - a typical Australian used to the egalitarian traditions of his country - could not accept it, especially in the light of Communist slogans. One would not agree with all his judgments. He failed to understand that this political system with all its flaws and defects enabled Russia to defeat the Nazi Germany and become a superpower after the war.

His book - *In the Shadow. Three Years in Moscow* - on which this page is based, was published in 1949 but has not lost its value at all after more than half a century. There is a very important point in his notes - the Cold War began not after WWII but during it. Communism and the Western World merely could not co-exist peacefully and that uneasy alliance between the Soviet Russia and the democratic countries of the West was destined to break up soon after the war.

Russia is a country of exceeding beauty. It casts its spell over all foreigners who remain long enough to know the varying moods of weather and countryside. The people are most lovable and possessed of qualities of heart and mind which inevitably draw you to them. That is why one who has spent nearly three years amongst them, as did my wife and I, must depart with a deep sense of loss, and with an accumulation of precious memories of this generous and gifted people.

The Russian masses live in the shadow of Communist dictatorship, a creed which believes neither in God nor man. The Shadow is darker over them, but it has touched our own lives, and is lengthening, deepening - threatening to blight all that is best in our civilization, everything that is sacred to the individual man and woman. That Shadow can be dispelled only by the light of truth, which means that every scrap of truthful information about the lives of the Russian people is of importance to every Australian. We have this decisive advantage over Communism in that we believe in the ancient words: "Great is the Truth and the Truth shall prevail."

August 28th, 1944:

The era of Victory is dawning. There are nightly salutes from the Kremlin guns and brilliant rocket displays. Tonight we watched from the Mokhovaya while rockets flashed in dazzling colours, making the night as bright as day and in between the flashes the Kremlin guns thundered.

September 3rd, 1944:

Visited this afternoon the much talked of Gorki Park of Culture and Rest, and found a charge of one rouble for admission. This is surely carrying the profit motive to its highest degree. I had never heard of a charge for admission to a public park. As a park it was nothing to boast of beyond its lovely situation along the Moskva River, but there was a spectacular collection of captured German equipment covering many acres.

September 19th, 1944:

I am amazed and disturbed that the British Commonwealth war effort gets scarcely a mention in the Soviet press, and that there is no mention of lend-lease. When [Admiral Standley](#), the former U.S. Ambassador, made a complaint to this effect a few months ago I felt very indignant in far-off Australia at this reflection on our Soviet allies, but now I am here, I feel admiration for his outburst of honest indignation.

Friday, September 22nd, 1944

The Second Front operations are dismissed in a few lines on the back page of Pravda and there is a general atmosphere of belittlement of what the Western Allies are doing. This is all the more surprising after the bitter Soviet complaints about the failure to open a Second Front.

Admittedly, of course, an observer must be handicapped by the extreme difficulty of obtaining exact information in the Soviet Union because of the barriers which divide foreigners from the people in general and the official classes in particular. Then again, I have tried always to take into account the fearful losses and destruction caused by war.

From the time of my arrival I tried to find an answer to the question: what is this system of government known as Bolshevism? It was many months before I could even begin to find an answer.

In commenting on the appearance of Moscow's people and buildings, I have not lost sight of the fact that the city has to be judged against a background of revolution, of a generation of civil turmoil and fratricidal strife, followed by years of total war against a ruthless enemy who long

seemed invincible. As regards the condition of the common people, the pitiful clothing, the squalor of the back streets and the wretched housing, it is impossible for a new-comer to judge how much of this is due to the war against Nazi-ism, and how much, if any, is due to other causes. But obviously the terrible dilapidation of the buildings, which filled me with amazement from the first moment of my stay in Moscow - even as we drove along lower Gorki Street from the airport - far ante-dates the war against Germany.

Meanwhile it was clear to me that under the Bolshevik regime the living standards of the Russian workers are far below those in Australia. The masses are living grey, drab lives resembling the dole conditions in this country during the depression years of the thirties - Moscow standards of housing and diet are lower than could be imagined by the ordinary Australian workman, and there is general indifference to the hard lot of the masses among the privileged classes. These comprise party officials, the senior army officers and higher bureaucracy, the intelligentsia, the successful theatrical artists and other public performers, and management personnel in industry.

This is more or less inevitable, for these favoured ones .i.e., all those whose services are of special value to the maintenance of the regime on military, economic and "cultural" grounds" move in their own pampered environment remote from the masses. They have their own shops, with special prices and rations. In many cases they can hardly be personally aware, except in a general way, of the awful living conditions prevailing outside their own privileged orbit. Indeed, they are constantly being assured in the newspapers that the dictatorship of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks is the best and most advanced system of Government in the world. To the privileged it is not only personally convenient, but politically advantageous to believe, or to pretend to believe, this to be true.

To my mind, the touchstone of the Soviet system is the condition of the workers and the share they receive of the fruits of their labour. If this is a true criterion, and if, in fact, the living standards of the workers are lamentably below those of Western countries, the Soviet cannot longer be regarded as a Revolutionary State governed on behalf of, and for the benefit of the workers and peasants. Rather it must imply be thought of as just another dictatorship, devoted its own perpetuation, maintained in power by coercion, and by physical control of all the necessities of life, to a degree previously unknown in the history of mankind.

The most astonishing feature of the Soviet regime to a person reared in the democratic environment of Australia is the privileged position of classes especially useful to the regime, and the economic discrimination against the workers in the way of unfair distribution of food stocks and housing space. It is true that the Soviet system expressly repudiates equalitarianism, but so does the capitalistic system. In that respect they are in complete agreement. But how can the Soviet system claim to be an instrument of social justice superior to any other system if it makes no more provision (indeed far less) for the material wellbeing of the masses? It maintains special shops, stores and welfare institutions for its own privileged classes, provides them with the best flats and apartments, gives them special recreational amenities and indeed every kind of economic and social privilege which can set one class of people apart from another. These privileged classes are the Praetorian Guard of the Bolshevik regime, the bulwark of the Socialist state. They comprise, as already indicated, the military, secret police, intelligentsia, artists, literatti, higher bureaucracy, those entrusted with the management of industry, and party officials in general.

If the Soviet system is related to a policy of improving the lot of mankind, I could find no tangible evidences of this. Of course, I read every day in the press that this was the case, that the regime was devoted to the material well-being of the people and that all they had to do was to work harder and there would soon be abundance for all that there would have been abundance already but for the Soviet's external economies and the machinations of capitalism. But this was all of the "There'll be pie in the sky" order, to quote the old I.W.W. doggerel. It was all paper talk, words. I saw no sign of the vast social betterment programme which the situation obviously called for. The losses inflicted on the Russian people by the war were terrible beyond description, and this fact must be taken into account. But one could not help thinking that very much could have been done

already to ameliorate the lot of the masses had the army been demobilized as soon as the war ended. We know that an act of unprovoked aggression against the Soviet Union is impossible. It is the tragedy of Russia and of the world that Russia should have had rulers who believe in such a possibility, and are still calling up some 900,000 of Soviet youth a year from industry into the armed forces, without counting the technical classes and officers still mobilized from the war which ended years ago. The Soviet is constantly bringing every kind of diplomatic, political and moral pressure on England to reduce her armed forces. It is but reasonable that she should be asked to set the example considering that she has by far the largest army in being in the world.

December 26th, 1944:

Christmastime is clouded for the British community here by Hun counter-offensive and by the trouble Britain is encountering in Greece. This trouble shows the shape of things to come. The Soviet press here is minimizing the Germany counter-offensive, and highly critical of the part Britain is playing in Greece.

December 28th, 1944:

I can see now that the press is writing down the [Hun offensive on the Western Front](#), and the tight Soviet control over information channels projects the world situation towards the Soviet reader and listener as through the reverse end of a telescope, making events occurring in Western Europe and the Pacific seem microscopic. The telescope is, however, turned the other way when it comes to describing Soviet exploits. This affects even foreigners, making it difficult to get affairs concerning Britain and America in true perspective.

Soviet control over public opinion gives it an immense stability which no Western democratic regime could possess. The Soviet makes its own public opinion, and not the slightest sign of disunity is permitted. .

Essentially the Russian people are a race of individualists cherishing high ethical ideals; devoted to things of the spirit; realising and valuing what is due by man to man; loving the abstract virtues; formerly intensely devoted to religion (and the elder generation is still so devoted) - a people sensitive, sympathetic and normally cheerful (though extremely volatile). The Russians are intensely interested in life, in people, and in the outside world. They realize that they have an enormous contribution to make in things of the spirit and of the mind to that world beyond the Iron Curtain; that they are being deprived of contact with contemporary life. To the thinking people of the older generation of Russians this must be one of the greatest of all their deprivations.

The Russian people are intensely proud of their past, as indeed they have good reason to be; and the Soviet Regime sedulously endeavours to turn this feeling to its own account by integrating or endeavouring to integrate the Bolshevik present with the historical past. The more thoughtful Russians realise that Fate has cheated them, and that they can do nothing about it. They must accept the present, but they do so with that detached submissiveness which, together with their seemingly unlimited capacity for suffering, self-sacrifice and deprivation, so greatly astonish the foreign observer.

The personal qualities of the Russians in general are most attractive and engaging. They are bright, eager to please others, but possessing a keen sense of what is due to them as individuals. This feeling is often crushed by circumstances, but it can never be extinguished by any form of ideological pressure. No matter how humble the status in life of each individual Russian I met, I was struck by his or her natural dignity, self-possession and complete freedom from the vulgarity which so often marks people of other countries in similar walks of life. It was a saying in the Foreign Colony in Moscow: "Think of a Russian and you think of someone you love.

So the seed of communism has fallen on stony ground in Russia. The people read the daily ideological articles and tendentious information. They can read nothing else in the Soviet press.

They seem to have the capacity of letting it slide off their minds without making any great impression. They are ardently patriotic, but not nationalistic in the aggressive sense. That is to say, they have an invincible love for and belief in the greatness of the destiny of Russia: but they are not a war-like or aggressive people. They want nothing more than to be left in peace, and to know what is going on in the mysterious world outside. Here again one finds the two nations. The aggressive expansionist policy of Communism is not the result of any impulse from the masses. It is indeed quite alien to them. Ready, if attacked, to defend Russia to the last man, woman and child, they want only peaceful relations with other peoples. They are not hostile to the political systems and policies of other countries. They certainly have no desire to impose any form of government or economic system on other peoples. In so far as the Russian people could have any voice in the matter, the peace of the world would be "beyond question" safe.

The moral standards of the Russian people are high. The easy divorce parlor and abortion clinics brought in by the 1917 revolution have disappeared like a fleeting nightmare. These were abhorrent to Russian instincts. The Soviet system with its low living standards and planned employment for men and women makes early marriage possible and the families are large. In Moscow streets there is obviously a high proportion of girl babies. Early marriage, combined with a high degree of fecundity, gives the Soviet a great advantage in population growth over most of the western powers excepting, possibly, the United States. The girls are taught to avoid the flaunting of sex. In public and in private they are modest and unassertive, to a degree almost forgotten in many other countries. There has never been a cult of the flapper, of flaming youth, and of [Bobby-soxers](#) in Moscow. In that respect Russian youth is half a century behind the times, and a very good thing for the nation this is. The mood of the Soviet administration in matters of morality is severe, indeed puritanical. The stage and literature are cleaner, I believe, than those of any western nation- Nothing improper or suggestive is permitted. Indecent books, relics of an earlier period, are proscribed. In three years I never saw any signs of street solicitation or of prostitution. Good conduct in public is strictly enforced by the Militia (i.e., the Gendarmerie) and in private (to avoid public scandals it is said) by the M.V.D. The Special Department tolerates liaisons between foreigners and Russian girls, provided there is no public scandal, but cases have come under my notice of girls disappearing when the departure of the foreigner has terminated such associations. I know of one very painful case of a girl who had associated with a foreigner on a semi-permanent basis being suddenly taken up and sent off to Siberia.

The non-official Russians I have met impressed me as being extremely responsive to outside influences. That is perhaps one of the chief reasons for the isolationist policy of the regime. The people I met were extremely eager to hear all about the foreigner, his way of life, customs and outlook.

January 5th, 1945:

Tonight we went to a preview of the film "Ivan Groznii"/[Ivan the Terrible](#) to us. It is a remarkable piece of direction (Eisenstein) conceived on an heroic scale with the theme closely interlocked with present day policy. It is a frank appeal to a militant patriotism which seeks greater power, if not domination, for the Soviet Union - a demand for the "manifest destiny" of Russia as imagined by Ivan the Terrible. Points which struck me included the emphasis placed on the religious ceremony at the crowning of the new Tzar this occupies a considerable part of the film and the frequent references to God and the Lord, but never to Christ and the Saviour. The theme I thought as much a sign of the time as current Soviet policy in Romania, Poland and Iran. The real theme is in the words of Ivan, "Two Romes have fallen, Moscow will be the third Rome."

February 23rd, 1945:

The 21th anniversary of the Red Army; and the papers are filled with well-justified rejoicings over the Red Army's successes in World War II, but have no words of praise for the Allies; indeed speak of them only in terms of disdain, almost with contempt.

April 28th, 1945:

A member of the British Military Mission told me today that the Soviet will not allow the Mission to establish its own hospital. He has spent some time in the North, and is very bitter about the failure to grant the British such facilities in Moscow after the 9 millions sterling sent by bombed England to the Soviet Red Cross. He said that in Murmansk he saw a beautiful ambulance unit unloaded. It bore a plate, "Presented by the children of Kingston-on-Thames!" He saw with his own eyes a Soviet minor official callously tear this off and throw it into the sea.

British Military Mission people here are amused at the inedible class distinctions in the Red Army. They say the pension of a Captain's widow (with two children) is 450 roubles a month, for a Marshal's widow 5000 a month, in addition to a lump sum of 20000 roubles

April 14th, 1945:

We went to the American Embassy this afternoon to attend the memorial service in honour of President Roosevelt, whose death has shocked us all. The service was beautifully simple and informal, but most solemn and impressive. I liked the fact that it was read by a sergeant, emphasizing the democratic way of life to Molotov and the other Soviet big-wigs present. The idea of a person of minor rank taking a prominent part in a big Soviet function or demonstration is unthinkable.

April 19th, 1945:

The deliberate underrating by the Moscow press of what Britain has done in the war, plus what I have heard from the Military Mission of the treatment in the North of British

sailors who have sacrificed their lives to bring supplies to the Soviet Union, have done more to turn me against this system than even the class distinctions and neglect of the needs of the masses. Soon after I first came I was given the case of two British sailors who had brought supplies through the dangerous Northern route where immersion in the icy seas for a few seconds means death. They became involved in a drunken brawl in Murmansk, or Arkhangel, I forget which. The Soviet refused to allow the British admiral to deal with them but arraigned them under Soviet law, and as they were Poor common sailors they each received sentences of hard labour one of twelve months and the other of nine months. In our country a fine of a couple of pounds would have met the circumstances. But these British sailors, denied their legal rights, under their own law, were given savage sentences - in other words, treated as Soviet citizens.

An article in "Pravda" says that the people of the Soviet Union made the greatest contribution to the fall of Hitlerism. But "Pravda" did not mention the shipment to the Soviet Union of 16250000 tons of war materials between October, 1941, and February, 1945, exclusive of flight-delivered aircraft.

April 21th, 1945:

At last, as the result of strong American pressure, there is a reference in the Moscow press to the help the Soviet received from the U.S.A.. The supplies mentioned include 13,000 aircraft, 50000 jeeps, 12850 armoured vehicles, more than 300,000 lorries and 3,000 "other machines." This is far from being the whole story.

April 28th, 1945:

Now that victory is nigh, it is sad to realize that the greatness of the victory has been tarnished by the disappointing realities of Allied relationships, and by what I read in the press here the consistent writing down of Allied assistance to the Soviet.

May 9h, 1945:

Not till 2 a.m. today did the Soviet announce the end of the war against Nazi Germany, though the Soviet participated in the signing of the instrument of unconditional surrender at Rheims on Monday at 2.41 a.m., and this is Wednesday! The Russian people were not told of this during the day, but only of the signing at Berlin yesterday by Marshal Zhukov, et al. At all events, to-day was proclaimed a Day of Victory and a non-working day. The people showed great friendliness in the streets to Americans, and officers were repeatedly tossed into the air by the crowds in Russian fashion.

May 17th, 1945:

The last straw in the consistent depreciation of Allied war effort is an article in "Izvestiya" by [Ilya Ehrenburg](#), in which, after pretending to praise the Allies, saying "they had earned their place at the victor's table," he had the effrontery to add that when Germany invaded the Soviet Union "the Soviet people were alone." The line here now is never to mention the Soviet Pact with Germany nor the help received by the Soviet after she was attacked. I wonder what would have happened to the Soviet had she really stood alone, i.e., had Britain and America been at peace with Germany in 1941. Thus history is falsified for scores of millions.

May 22nd, 1945:

"Red Star" published an article stating that Germany had the war won before the Soviet entered the struggle. Other papers said that the people of Europe owed their liberty "first and foremost to the Red Army." The world has been most generous in its praise of what the Red Army has done, but I cannot help feeling bitter now because I never read a word here of honest praise of an ally, nor a word of generous acknowledgment of the help the Soviet received.

June 23rd, 1945:

Ehrenburg, whose patronage is even more repulsive than his enmity, says in his latest article: "We think with kind soldierly approval of London which held out." Thus dismissing Britain's war effort, he says, "Only one wound received by Fascism was mortal that dealt at Stalingrad by the Red Army."

One of the most revealing features of the Soviet regime at home is its attitude to the relatively small number of foreigners admitted to the Soviet Union. These are almost entirely congregated in Moscow. Elaboration of this theme is of special interest to the people of other countries who should contrast the absolute freedom of movement and contact allowed Soviet officials, as in Australia, for instance, with the barriers which exist in Moscow. The real significance and importance of these barriers cannot be understood by those who have never come against them. As will be seen, the subject is a complex one, deriving partly from the inner nature of communism, and partly from the external and internal problems which the Bolshevik Revolution has had to face. The attitude of suspicion and dislike (even hatred in some cases) displayed by those who form the State apparatus and comprise its protege classes but rarely if ever encountered among the common people is of far more than local importance to the foreigners in Moscow. It is symptomatic of the brusque attitude to the outside world disclosed by the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. Consequently the subject deserves fairly exhaustive treatment because, without an understanding of the official attitude to foreigners in Moscow, it is impossible to understand much of which appears enigmatic to the outside world in Soviet reactions to external events. Contact with foreigners in Moscow is not permitted beyond the minimum extent necessary for the convenience of the State in its relations with the diplomatic corps and other foreign delegations and guests admitted behind the iron curtain. Of course, there would be no foreigners in Moscow at all, did not the Soviet consider that it derives handsome advantage from the exchange of diplomatic representatives, and from the few other restricted contacts permitted on an official or semi-official basis. For the official, ordinary, normal friendliness with a foreigner is most

dangerous. Even suspicion of such an attitude may well blast his entire prospects. Thus, there is a special iron curtain between the Soviet officials and foreigners in Moscow. You can get to a certain point in friendly converse on a matter of business but beyond that nothing. You may be greeted with friendly smiles one day for a special reason, and next day receive nothing but a blank look. If puzzled and you persist in conversing, there will be an uneasy glance over the shoulder, a quick muttered apology - "*Izvinite, Ochen' zanyat*" ("Excuse, very busy") and a rapid exit. Normal human relations in such circumstances are impossible. There is generally an atmosphere of strain or stiffness in meeting Soviet officials, and this explains the grim-faced groups standing apart from the foreigners at the official diplomatic receptions, the nervous glances to make sure that other Russians are near by, and the early departures of the uneasy guests. In Moscow it is not good to be alone with a foreigner. When reported to higher authority it may seem suspicious. Within limits which will be explained later, Soviet officials accept invitations to diplomatic receptions, but they or their wives never entertain the Diplomatic Corps. Soviet wives are rarely seen at public receptions, and it is practically impossible to have Russian acquaintances, let alone friends, of one's own protocol or official level, or to visit or be visited by them.

Almost immediately after my arrival I was shocked to learn of ill-treatment and brutal punishment for relatively trivial offences (drunkenness and fighting) of British sailors in Murmansk, who had risked their lives to bring sorely needed war supplies to the Soviet Union. I found that this was common talk among the members of the British Military Mission then in Moscow, who naturally very deeply resented the incidents I refer to. It seemed incredible to me that members of Allied Forces, risking to help the Soviet Union, could be badly treated by officials. However, the facts are beyond dispute. They referred to fairly extensively in his book on Russia, "Russian Outlook", by Lieut-General Sir [Giffard Martel](#), the former head of the British Military Mission, who had left Russia just before I arrived. His book is worth reading, if only for his account of the conditions which British seamen had to put up with at the termini of the Northern Route, and throws a white light on the real attitude of the regime towards friendly foreigners. I never quite recovered from the shock of these disclosures. The whole diplomatic corps was talking of them at a time when optimistic hopes of a close, permanent and fruitful friendship between Britain and the Soviet Union were being earnestly entertained by responsible British leaders and by the British press.

When I arrived in Moscow in the summer of 1944, the barriers against Allied foreigners had been somewhat lowered (temporarily as events were to prove). The legal position of Russians having contact with foreigners was determined by Article 58 (4) (1942 Edition) of the Soviet Criminal Code, which rendered liable to drastic penalties, persons affording any kind of aid to members of the "international bourgeoisie" "seeking to bring about a change in the Soviet system." Under this provision, the security police could arrest and punish any Soviet citizen whose association with foreigners it might choose to regard as counter-revolutionary. Thus, even in conditions of wartime alliance against the common enemy, there was a sword of Damocles hanging over the head of any Russian who had any form of unauthorised contact with foreigners. As I have indicated before, there were certain types of Soviet citizens specially permitted forms of contact which varied according to the person concerned. Apart from the personnel of Voks (*All-Soviet Society of Cultural Connections with Foreign Countries -VK*) and Burobin (and those registered for service with foreigners through Burobin) the classes of Russians so authorised comprised (1) So-called "Tame Russians," i.e., a small group of higher officials, members of the intelligentsia, and theatrical people including a few dancers from the ballets; (2) Officials principally of the then Kommissariats of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and of the Press Department of Narkomindel, whose business it was to deal with the diplomatic corps and the press correspondents; (3) Officials and staff of Intourist, the Soviet travel company; (4) Secretaries of press correspondents; and (5) Girls, often, though not necessarily, of the "floozy" type often, but not necessarily always, "planted" on the foreigner by the Secret Police.

Many of these girls were students of English at the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages and, no doubt, were encouraged to seek such contacts for practice in the language. These girl students, whose conduct was invariably most correct, were quite distinct from the "floozy" girls who ring up new-comers at the hotels and try to arrange meetings in the street. Another type, the "good-time" girls, who, literally in droves, associated freely with the American and British

personnel of the military missions in 1944, were most of all interested in foreign stockings, shoes, and the food at the disposal of the military missions.

In the highest grade of those officially permitted to meet foreigners in Moscow on special occasions, in the last stages of World War II, stood the ageing Litvinov - once a world figure and author of the phrase "Peace is indivisible"; one of the heroes of the attempt in the thirties to establish collective security against the Nazi menace. With him was generally associated on all of what may be termed "Anglo-American occasions," Maisky, formerly Soviet Ambassador to England. Those stood in receiving lines at receptions, saying little to anyone and generally disappearing early. They were used facades to show that there was, in fact, contact with foreigners. Ilya Erhenburg, writer of furious diatribes against Britain and America, was another familiar figure at foreign receptions and, going well down the Soviet social scale, one remembers the Burobin (*presumably one of organizations working with foreigners* VK) architect Alexandrov who appeared very often, and continues to appear, at foreign receptions, having been allowed more latitude in this respect than any other official Russian I can recall. There were others to be seen occasionally - the poet [Marshak](#), translator of English verse into Russian; [Borodin](#), who almost became Soviet Dictator of China, and now as editor of the English-language bi-weekly *Moscow News*, is one of the few survivors in a responsible position of the older Bolsheviks. It became monotonous, and not a little pathetic, to see the same few Russian faces time after time at English or American receptions. The pretenses wore very thin.

Women secretaries of foreign correspondents were of course "vetted" by the N.K.V.D. but were not necessarily agents. The personal contacts of the foreign correspondents in Moscow are, in practice, confined to the diplomatic personnel, and to these girl secretaries and their acquaintances. In one or two cases these secretaries attained positions of no little influence with their employers. Only when a reception was given by, or in honour of, some satellite State, was there a very big attendance of Russians. Then they would turn out in droves and one would be dazzled by the Soviet orders and gold braid. A Yugoslav reception would, as early as in 1945, rate a Russian attendance of ten times or more the number normally seen at an American or British reception. At Anglo-American parties only the "appropriate" Soviet personnel could be expected to accept invitations.

In no event did Soviet officials return hospitality; outside these receptions and the course of official work, no foreign resident of Moscow could expect to meet any Russian occupying a responsible official position.

The members of the Allied Military Missions, and later the service attaches at allied embassies, had no opportunity of even meeting Russian officers, let alone of discussing service matters with them. Social contacts between them and Soviet service personnel were strictly limited to formal public receptions.

At that time (*end of the War* - VK) high hopes were held out of a change of heart in the Soviet regime as a result of its narrow escape from destruction, and of the generous whole-hearted support given it by its Allies, particularly in the supply of an incalculable mass of war material. There was, undoubtedly, some relaxation of the attitude towards foreigners, and this led to all kinds of over-optimistic hopes following ostensible dissolution of the [Comintern](#); the signing of the Alliance with Britain; the cessation of activities of the Bezbozhnikh (the anti-God Society), and the patronage of the Orthodox Church by the state, evidenced by the enthronement of a Patriarch of Moscow early in 1945; the nationalistic rather than the ideological note struck in the Soviet press during the war, especially when the war was at a critical stage.

These circumstances created hopes which have been completely falsified. The campaign against religion has not been revived, but in all other spheres there have been sharp reaction and widespread disillusionment. A powerful ideological drive of mid-1946 in every realm of Soviet life was accompanied by a severe tightening up of the attitude to foreigners, and a constant outpouring of attacks on western ideas.

It will be clear from the foregoing that the post-war trends of Soviet policy have turned sharply away from the limited co-operation and contact with foreigners permitted when the Soviet was fighting for its life. It is the old story of "when the Devil was sick." The Soviet wants to get as much as it can from the outside world and to give nothing in return. Distrust, dislike, even hatred of foreigners, are assiduously cultivated among the people in official circles and through the press. I rarely, if ever, met any sign of this attitude among non-official Russians - I was almost invariably treated with the greatest courtesy and kindness by private individuals and by most minor officials. But with few exceptions the coldness and brusqueness of higher officialdom gradually become more pronounced in the post-war period. When I left Moscow at the beginning of July, 1947, the general expectation amongst foreigners was that their position was to become increasingly difficult.

August 8th, 1945:

Tonight Moscow radio announced that from midnight a state of war would exist with Japan. This is not such wonderful news as it would have been a few months ago. The Soviet allowed the psychological moment to pass. Japan is already defeated and it is now only a matter of the Soviet being in for the kill.

August 12th, 1945:

Today the great physical culture display was held in Red Square, but the people saw nothing of it. The streets were cordoned off in the vicinity of Red Square. The display was gorgeous to see from a distance owing to the effective display of bright colours. The costuming and outfitting were not particularly smart at close range, but the girls, who predominated, looked bright, cheerful and most attractive. We had not been looking at it long from the rooms of the N.Z. Minister at the hotel, when we received a message to close the windows. We pointed out that people were watching through open windows from the Hotel Moskva opposite. But it was of no avail! , A plainclothes N.K.V.D. man came in with the hotel servant and waited until we closed the windows.

August 14th, 1945:

Already the Soviet is beginning to claim to have conquered Japan, and there has been no mention of the atomic bomb in the Soviet press since President Truman's broadcast. "Pravda" today stated: "The strength of the blows inflicted by the Soviet forces on Japan can be judged from the fact that a move for surrender has begun there."

August 15th, 1945:

V.J. Day; a day of special thanksgiving to all Australians.

There is no announcement of a holiday or any celebration here. But the British and Americans had their own celebration. There was no excitement because we had known for some days that the surrender of Japan was to be expected... The people are told in the newspapers that though the war is over they must continue to work hard. There must be no let-up. A woman foreign correspondent told me today that she had written a story about a Russian official who said to her, "Well the six days' war is over." She replied very effectively, "It has been a six years' war for us." The Soviet censor cut this out when she lodged her message this evening.

September 29th, 1945:

The Soviet is now vigorously attacking the idea of a Western block while forming an Eastern bloc itself. The only hope of peace I can see for the future is a strong Western Bloc, not for aggression which is unthinkable, but to keep the Soviet in check. Meanwhile there should be a powerful educational programme in each democratic country to show how completely the Soviet system is

in conflict with the rights of man as conceived not only by Christianity, but by the radical advanced thought which has lifted mankind from barbarism by painful steps throughout the ages.

The people of Australia should know of the awful living conditions here - the complete denial of the Freedoms, the squeezing of the last ounce of endeavour and production out of the masses; the abysmal gap between the privileged and unprivileged classes; and the destruction of individuality of soul and body. Could those in other countries who are striving for a better world and a fairer deal of the workers, and who honestly believe that the Soviet system is a step towards this goal, but know the facts, there would be a revulsion of feeling which would strengthen the foreign policy of the democracies and prevent us all from being engulfed.

December list, 1945:

Looking back over the past year and recalling Soviet intransigence, it is clear to me that the prospect of co-operation on fundamentals between the Great Powers has disappeared, whatever measure of agreement has been secured so far has been gained only by giving way to the Soviet, and this has had the effect of making the Kremlin believe that by pressure it can get its own way in everything. There is no realization among the ruling classes here of the importance of public opinion in democratic countries.

February 23rd, 1946:

The Soviet press so far has not mentioned Bevin's offer to extend the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of friendship to fifty years. So the Russian people have no way of knowing of this turning of the other cheek unprecedented, considering all the provocation [Bevin](#) and Britain have received by the constant Soviet attacks in the Security Council and in the Soviet press.

February 26th, 1946:

Judging by the vast amount of anti-British matter in the Moscow press, a political offensive against Britain is in full blast. The effect of this may be the exact opposite of what the Soviet wants. It fears more than anything else a revival of German military strength, but its present policy must inevitably bring about restoration of balance of power theories.

March 16th, 1946:

Amazed to find that [Dr. Evatt](#) in Parliament on March 13, in answering the question "Does Russia intend aggression?" said he took the view that the Soviet policy was intended mainly towards self-protection and that pessimism in regard to relations with Russia seemed to be unjustified. How he could say that with the information at his disposal completely baffles me.

April 2nd, 1946:

"Novoe Vremya" (New Times), No. 7, has a sharp attack on the former Australian Minister (Mr. Maloney) for his criticism of the Soviet Union. This regime assumes the right to criticise others furiously, but would deny that right to those who wish to let the world know the truth about it. It specially objected to Maloney's complaint about the sharp division of classes in the Soviet Union with which I whole-heartedly agree.

The Soviet contention that the press in democratic countries is in the hands of monopoly capitalism or controlled by organizations interested in distorting and suppressing truth, though possessing a superficial appearance of truth, will not bear close investigation. It ignores two basic facts: (1) The success and the very existence of a newspaper in these countries depend upon public opinion. Without readers there are neither circulation nor advertisements. To say that advertisers control newspapers is to put the cart before the horse. The advertisements come from circulation, and so it is the reader who controls, makes, or breaks newspapers. Journals

dependent for their existence upon the goodwill of hundreds of thousands of readers, as in Australia, America and Britain, cannot be said to be controlled by a few "monopoly capitalists." (2) Any cause, no matter how obscure or unpopular, can obtain a forum in democratic countries, which, of course, is not true in the Soviet Union. This applies specially to Communist activities in a country like Australia. Our local Communists have their own press organs which freely circulate and freely attack the existing order in Australia. Such a situation would be unthinkable in the Soviet Union. That these communistic organs are not as large and influential as the great dailies is because their appeal is restricted to an infinitesimal section of the Australian people. That is the sole limiting factor.

I was amused to read, while in Moscow, that a paper, "Ourselves and Russia," or bearing some such name, had been established in Sydney, and that the name of Ilya Ehrenburg, the violent anglophobe writer, was given as one of the patrons. The issue of a journal in Moscow named "Ourselves and Australia" would be a stark impossibility. The dissemination of Soviet propaganda in Australian cities when no propaganda in favour of our own system of government is permitted in the Soviet Union is, of course, an all but intolerable abuse of that freedom of the press, and freedom of information on which we base our approach to public affairs; but, abuse or no abuse, we are bound to permit it in the name of freedom. So, the very fact that Communist newspapers and propaganda are permitted in democratic countries is, in itself, a complete refutation of the claim that the press of those countries is in the hands of "monopolists and greedy persons," interested only in profits and perpetuating their own dominating position; for it is greatly against the private and personal interests of such persons to permit communistic propaganda. They either do not wish to, or cannot prevent the circulation of newspapers and ideas injurious to them politically and personally. In either case, the Communist indictment clearly falls to the ground in every country which tolerates Communistic newspapers.

The most pronounced impression one receives from perusal of *Pravda* or *Izvestiya* is the brusque, offensive, frequently threatening mode of expression used in speaking of other peoples, the constant ascription of base motives, the refusal to admit the possibility of people being actuated by motives of magnanimity, or even of ordinary decency; the base ingratitude to faithful, generous Allies who, had they been inspired by the motives attributed to them by the organs of the Soviet, could have carried on a holding war against Germany and permitted the Soviet to be devoured by Hitler. This, it is repeatedly declared in the Soviet press, was the real aim of Britain and America in the [days of Munich](#). As far as I personally am concerned, I went to the Soviet Union in a spirit of hero-worship and profound admiration. Nothing there so shocked me as the unfriendly and ungenerous references to Britain and America published constantly in the Soviet press, even long before the war had ended.

Remembering the complete freedom of movement and contact allowed Mikheev (*one of the creators of the Soviet spy network in Australia in 1940-ties - VK*) in Australia, I could not help wondering whether the commonsense rule of reciprocity should not be applied that Soviet correspondents in British countries should be allowed exactly the freedom permitted British correspondents in Moscow. That is the only principle on which any satisfactory dealings can be had with Soviet officials. So far from being appreciative of any concession, help, or privilege, their training is to despise people who help them in such directions. They are taught to believe and most of them do believe that no one does a kindly, friendly, helpful or decent act for its own sake such things are done only from fear, force or craft. They reject the existence of what we call goodwill and that is the tragedy of this age. But application of a relevant reciprocity principle is something which the typical Soviet functionary can readily understand and even respect. Certainly Soviet officialdom will yield only what it must in such circumstances, but the other party will get something in return. By simply granting Soviet requests on a non-reciprocal basis, the other party receives only contempt in return. Had the Anglo-American authorities acted on this sound principle of strict reciprocity in dealing with the Soviet at the end of the war, most of the world-wide evils caused to-day by Communist aggression could have been averted, Tass, especially,

in view of the exposure of its role in Canada, has no right to any facilities in British countries beyond those granted to British correspondents in Moscow.

The Royal Commission's report on the Canadian spy ring showed that [Dekanozov](#), then second Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, had been giving the TASS representatives certain (unspecified) tasks. Thus was established a link between the Soviet Foreign Office and the secret activities of TASS.

It is clear that the Soviet press is simply part of the apparatus of State - a department of the propaganda machine operated for the express purpose of presenting the point of view of the Communist Party on all questions, inside and outside the Soviet Union, and of securing the continuance in power of the present regime. This purpose is, of course, well-known to the Russian people. The real power of the Soviet press over their minds is difficult to judge; but it is inevitable that the constant pressure exerted by 5,600 newspapers, with a daily circulation of at least 30,000,000 copies, must have a powerful effect on the people, especially in those cities where there is no possibility of contact directly or indirectly with the outside world and in the provinces and countless villages.

Though the ultimate effect of its work can only be guessed at, the nature of that work can be ascertained beyond question. The Soviet press is spreading the gospel of hatred and suspicion, and is probably the greatest single menace to peace in the world to-day. It is preparing the Russian people psychologically for the possibility of war. Daily the dispatches flow in from Tass alleging the revival of Fascism, anti-Soviet campaigns and plots, unfriendly acts and war-like preparations in this country or that in the United States, Britain, Sweden, China, Norway, Italy, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Australia - in every country where there is any opposition to Soviet policy. If they have any effect at all these dispatches must poison the minds of the Russian peoples against other friendly peoples. Everyone who disagrees with the Soviet is called a Fascist by TASS and the Soviet press, and all the time the cry of "encirclement" is going up. And the tragedy is that all this poisoning of the minds of millions is so unnecessary. Everyone wanted to be friendly with the Soviet, to join with it in building a better new world on the ruins of the old. But Communism cannot understand friendship. It comprehends only force and subjection.

May 1st, 1946:

May Day passed off with the same prison-like restrictions in the hotel where we live diplomatic personnel were allowed to see the procession enter Red Square only through closed double windows, though the windows of the Hotel Moskva opposite (reserved for Russians) were wide open. Protests were unavailing. The corridors of the hotel swarmed with plain-clothed M.V.D. men.

January 7th, 1947:

In the first issue for 1947 of "Novoe Vremya" (now changed to a weekly paper) there is a long article analyzing Anglo-U.S. relations, in which the statement is made that since the war British policy has been directed against the Soviet Union. Actually the reverse is true. Since the end of the war there has been nothing but attacks and abuse of British policy. The Soviet twice attacked Britain in the Security Council and did not even trouble to inform its people that Britain had offered to extend the term of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty to fifty years. Only after Churchill's Fulton speech was this allowed to get through to the Russian people. I have read nothing but hostility to Britain in the Soviet press. The Soviet has never, since the war ended, been willing to reciprocate the spirit of friendship which Britain and her people undoubtedly felt for the Soviet Union at the end of the war. There was then a wonderful fund of goodwill for the Soviet, and it is not Britain's fault that it has been dissipated.

January 10th, 1947:

"Izvestiya" today published an article by its military correspondent, Galaktionov, on the [battle of El Alamein](#), making a special point of Viscount [Montgomery](#)'s smashing of the German centre which, he said, was the main feature of the battle. Galaktionov did not mention the Australian Ninth Division (Alexander means the breakthrough of the Australians on the Northern flank of Axis defense which became the turning point of the battle - VK).

In *Kulture I Zhizn*, No. 5 of March 20th, 1947, Academician [Tarle](#) published a scorching article attacking the B.B.C. Russian language broadcasts, claiming that these were misleading the Soviet people. The following extract from the article is of interest to Australia:

"In its broadcasts the B.B.C. misses no opportunity, whenever apposite and sometimes quite inappositely, of mentioning Australia. One peculiarity, however, of these broadcasts about Australia astounds Soviet listeners. The B.B.C. has never once touched on the question why the attacks by Evatt and other Australians and New Zealanders upon the U.S.S.R. are so frequent and invariably so hostile. On this the B.B.C. has remained as silent as the grave. We have heard of the astounding qualities of heart and mind of Minister McKell, 'the symbol of social equality' (broadcast of February 7th), and of the boilermakers and blacksmiths who have been in every respect wonderful and arch-democratic Ministers in Australia. But why these boilermakers, having worked their way up to the rank of Minister without exception, gladly and grossly attack the U.S.S.R. we have not learned. It is incomparably more interesting, however, for Soviet listeners to learn this than to hear that McKell loves boxing and even when 'Minister for Justice in New South Wales' once appeared in a match 'wearing a red jersey' and was so truly democratic as to knock out the teeth of a middleweight champion who was by no means a Minister and therefore had no right to expect such flattering attention from His Excellency."

Novoye Vremya, the influential Soviet weekly devoted to foreign affairs, in its number of May 1st, 1947, published under the heading "An Australian Paradise" an extremely unfriendly article on Australia's attempts to secure immigrants, ridiculing claims of good living conditions in Australia and drawing attention to slum conditions in Sydney. It described the immigration policy as a drive for cheap labour "by stock breeders and factory owners." It asserted that there was widespread dissatisfaction among demobilised soldiers in Melbourne and Sydney and a great amount of unemployment. *"Asseverations about the high living standards in Australia have already been exposed as fairy stories."*

An article on Post-War Australia by Zakharin, published in *Novoe Vremya* of March 10th, 1948, describes Australia as a place where it is typical to find wanderers drowning themselves rather than fall into the hands of the police ("Waltzing Matilda" is quoted as evidence of this!); where human beings are born and die on the roadside; where the governing classes are now "trembling before the advance of democratic consciousness." No Australian would, of course, take this kind of nonsense seriously, but it has to be remembered that *Novoe Vremya* is extensively distributed in foreign language translations in every country where communist organisations exist. It is one of the most widely read periodicals in existence, and millions of dupes take for gospel what they see in it. The lies and distortions published about one country in *Novoe Vremya*, grotesque as they seem to people of that country, are absorbed with avidity by the fellow travellers in other countries; so the exposures in a particular country of falsehoods published about that country do not change the general propaganda effect. But no country with any national spirit will allow injurious statements about its way of life to pass unchallenged.

As far as is known no attempt has ever been made by the Australian External Affairs Department or by the Information Department to induce *Novoe Vremya* or any other Soviet publication which has published false and misleading information about Australia to print a retraction or correction. Such attempts would, of course, be fruitless; but they would, at all events, show vigilance on the part of those entrusted with the responsibility of protecting Australia's good name abroad. All references to Australia in the Soviet press are received by the External Affairs Department and, one would imagine, are made available to the Department of Information.

So that is what they say about Australia in Moscow. Only once during my stay in Moscow did I read anything that could be construed as praise of Australian policy, and that was in 1947, when, on the principle that any stick is good enough to beat a dog with, the Soviet press expressed approval of Dr. Evatt's protest against the decision by General [McArthur](#) to send a second Japanese whaling expedition into the Antarctic.

It must not be imagined that Australia is singled out among the British nations for contemptuous and unfriendly references of the type which I have quoted. Abuse of Britain occupied a large share of Soviet newspaper space after the war, up to the time we left. An issue of *Pravda* which did not have some hostile reference to Britain was exceptional. Canada, despite the immense help which it had given the Soviet Union through its mutual aid plan during the Great War, was frequently under the lash, especially after the dispatch of the Musk Ox Expedition to the North in 1946, and for its alleged willingness to facilitate United States plans hostile to the Soviet Union. South Africa, too, came in for a great deal of adverse attention because of its alleged reactionary policy, exploitation of natives and refusal to grant civil rights to Indians. Since the Paris Peace Conference of 1946, those who direct Australian foreign policy have accepted without protest all the Soviet attacks upon the British, the Australian way of life, and have even taken the side of the Soviet against Britain at international conferences. That attitude does not represent the mood of the Australian people, who are the very last on earth to return friendship for kicks for contempt, abuse and misrepresentation of the type outlined in this chapter.

When our own "fellow travellers" talk about the necessity for friendship with the Soviet Union they should be reminded that friendship is a two-way process. When he hears talk about Soviet goodwill by our own crypto-Communists and fellow travellers, the Australian who knows what the Soviet people are told about us is reminded of the old saying, "Perhaps it was wise to dissemble your love, but why did you kick us downstairs?"

January 17th, 1947:

I was amused to see a copy of "Russia and Us" - a journal published in Sydney (Imagine the Russians permitting us to publish a paper in Moscow called "Australia and Us.") I was still more amused to see among the names of "Patrons" Ilya Ehrenburg, the writer who sneers at everything British, including the British war effort. I remember well how he wrote that the Soviet was "alone" for a year after Germany attacked her, and the indignation which I felt at reading this, remembering the events of 1939-40 and Molotov's denunciation in 1940 of Britain and France as aggressors. Ehrenburg writes the most outrageous things about the Anglo-Saxon peoples, and it is an insult to Australia to present him as a patron of anything Australian. He wrote a series of articles about America after his recent visit which must have had the effect of causing dislike of anything American in the minds of any unsuspecting Russians who believed what he wrote*

(Note: "All about Soviet Russia and nothing about us" was the witty comment of the "Sydney Morning Herald" on this publication.)

January 18th, 1947:

Looking back over my life here I cannot help thinking that the worst feature of all is the vast chasm between the over and the under privileged classes. All kinds of things which strike us as strange and wrong may possibly be excused because these are a different people with different ways of thought. But privilege in a system which pretends to be existing for the benefit of all the people cannot be excused. This is the fundamental injustice in the life of the masses. Apart from control one's food and movement, privilege is the cardinal feature of this system because it creates the vested interest amongst various nuclei which safeguard the regime. When we see around us how terribly the ordinary people live, the commercial shop system with its luxury goods and access to rationed goods for those who can pay, the closed shops for special sections, army, intelligentsia, party members, and the like is positively revolting. In Australia one can live without loss of personal dignity and can have a sufficiency of the necessities of life without the privileges which

exist for some. But how unimportant, fundamentally, these privileges are the ordinary material advantages which the rich or better-off enjoy! But here, without privilege, only a wretched existence in drab poverty is possible.

January 21st, 1947:

The issue of "Time" which has just reached here contains an article alleged to be based on secret documents in which it was stated that twice, and especially in 1943, the Soviet was willing to make a separate peace with Hitler, but Germany would not bid high enough. This may be connected with the fact that on two occasions, and especially late in 1943, the late Mr. [Curtin](#) solemnly warned his press conference at Canberra that there was a danger of Russia making a separate peace.

Major-General John R. Deane, who was head of the American Military Mission when we came to Moscow, has written a book, "Strange Alliance," in which, according to a review I have just read, he draws attention to the lack of co-operation, suspiciousness and other strange characteristics of official Russians with which I am so familiar. At the same time he mentions the splendid personal qualities of the non-official Russians he has met servants and so on and has come to the conclusion that there is a vast gap between the Government and the people. This is, of course, my own conclusion.

February 4th, 1947:

This week's "Novoe Vremya" has an attack on [General Deane](#), former head of the U.S. Military Mission, for his book on his experiences in Russia. The book is described as "calumnious." The charge is made that he attempted to whittle down the supply of lend-lease material to Russia and that he opposed a second front in the West, preferring an attack on the Germans through the Balkans. He is described as a pupil of Churchill. It is interesting and most important as showing Soviet methods that no details are given to the Soviet reader of any of the alleged lies, and thus he has no opportunity of knowing of the charges made by General Deane of inefficiency and procrastination, of waste of valuable war material, and of defective support by the Soviet of the disastrous shuttle-bombing experiment.

Saturday, February 8th, 1947:

Following General Deane's book on his experiences in the Soviet which so aroused the ire of "Novoe Vremya," a former head of the British Military Mission (Lieut.-General Sir Charles Martel), who was here before my time, has written a similar book which has caused another outburst from "Novoe Vremya." The more I think over the anger aroused in official circles by criticism the more I realise that this proceeds from fear. It is an admission that thought is stronger than physical force. Otherwise a regime so strongly entrenched physically, with unlimited power at its disposal, could snap its fingers at what is said against it. But the fact is that the Soviet fears and hates criticism more than anything, thus stultifying its own philosophy which teaches that matter and material things are primary.

February 26th, 1947:

One recent writer in England asked "How sure is the Communist Party of its position in Russia? Not very sure, I have long thought. The eagerness to claim every particle of credit for the victory against the Axis and the generally hysterical note in the paeans of praise of the Bolshevik Party at the end of the war convinced me that it must have felt its position to have been touch-and-go long after the most critical phases of the war. There is a severe tightening up now that it is over its fright.

Saturday, March 2nd, 1947:

This week's "Novoe Vremya" has an article violently attacking [Geoffrey Blunden](#) for having written "A Room on the Route," which shows the Soviet regime in a most unfavourable light. It is interesting and highly characteristic of such cases that, although the book is described in "Novoe Vremya" as containing "dirty calumnies" against the Soviet Union, the Soviet reader is left to guess what these "calumnies" are. He is given no information on which to form his own judgment.

On March 6th, Professor Zvarich gave a lecture on the British Dominions in international relationships. Here is his estimate of the role of Australia in the war: "The Governments of [Lyons](#) and [Menzies](#) have been strong supporters of the Munich policy and Australia had welcomed Japanese aggression in Manchuria and China on the grounds that it would divert Japanese aggression towards the Soviet Union. In 1941, Australia was herself faced with a threat from Japan, a threat which blinded her eyes to all other concerns and found expression in opposition to a second front in Europe. Australia's indifference to the fate of Europe in 1941-42 must be recalled when Evatt claims the right to have a say in matters such as the reparations to be paid by Romania, etc."

I have never seen a friendly appreciative public reference to Australia in the press - everything has been hostile.

April 18th, 1947:

Ehrenburg has begun writing in "Culture and Life," attacking the Voice of America broadcasts in Russian. He has repeated the old lie, a favourite with him, that the Soviet was left alone against the Nazi hordes. Churchill's statement in an article in "Life" which has just reached me, that the Soviet does not want war, but the fruits of war, is exactly right, is right also when he says that firm but just treatment of the Soviet is the surest guarantee of peace.

May Day, 1947:

Kath and I received an invitation to the May Day Parade in Red Square. Arrived in bright spring sunshine. There were three systems of "control" to get through before we reached the stand. The procession began at 10 a.m. sharp, when Molotov and other dignitaries (I could not see Stalin, but apparently he was there) took their usual vantage point on top of the Lenin Mausoleum. The military part of the procession lasted an hour and a half, and then came the march of thousands of chosen workers with their banners. Participation in the march for those chosen is of course "a must" just as participation by any worker not specifically chosen is a must-not. The workers' procession went on for hours.

The most interesting part of the military section was the fly past of some fifty jet planes, the first time I had seen jets in flight. They made an impressive display roaring past with incredible speed. I am told that these were manufactured under license from R.A.F. prototypes. Marshal [Budyenni](#), with his celebrated moustaches, was in charge of the parade, riding a magnificent charger. The marching was impressive for the great number of men used, but rather dragged at times, and there was an unpleasant resemblance to the Hun goosestep. Security troops, the M.V.D., swarmed everywhere. When the civilian portion of the parade began, a stentorian -voice through loud speakers roared out the usual slogans and salutations, each ending with a prolonged prodigious "Oora," which was the signal for the marching crowds to cheer in response. I thought the response surprisingly thin dutiful rather than spontaneous and enthusiastic.

May 2nd, 1947:

In the May Day issue of "Pravda" Ehrenburg has an article on America, as usual dripping with doubly distilled poison. The tone of it may be judged from the sneering reference to lend-lease. "There are Stalingrad streets in hundreds of towns in Europe. I have never seen a lend-lease street." Yet if there is any place where there ought to be a lend-lease street it is the Soviet Union.

May 9th, 1947:

Today is the day of Victory, and the articles in the Moscow press are devoted to making the people believe that the Allies of the Soviet were not really in the war. There are references to a "four years war" in "Pravda." The anniversary slogan on the front page of "Pravda" reads: "Two years ago, the Soviet people, its army and armed forces directed by our mighty leader and commander, Comrade Stalin, completely destroyed Fascist Germany and triumphantly concluded the great patriotic war." One special article in "Pravda" said the most important role in victory was played by the Soviet people. Then it revived the old complaints about a Second Front, saying the war could have been ended a year earlier. Today, the article said, "We could have been celebrating a third year of victory. We could have welcomed many amongst us whose memory is now sadness. We are not to blame for lengthening the war into the fourth (sic) year." The article adds that "certain friends" tried to prolong the war and to prevent the complete destruction of Hitlerism.

It certainly was a four-year war for the Soviet, but it was a six-year war for Britain and Australia.

May 17th, 1947:

Today I went to the TASS offices in the Boulevard to try and buy some photographs of the Kremlin cathedrals. I found the entrance and passages guarded by uniformed M.V.D. men. Everyone, without exception, going into the lift or coming out had to show a pass. I was not admitted to the foreign section because, so I was told, the director was out, and no one else could authorise the issue of a propusk (pass) to me. TASS is obviously under the special protection of the M.V.D. But why do we in Australia allow the TASS representatives to go everywhere, even to see defense works, military installations, and the like. How foolishly trusting we are!

May 20th, 1947:

The British Labour Party has issued a handbook on foreign policy which shows at last a flash of spirit - "Cards on the Table." It asserts quite truly that since 1945 the Soviet has set itself out to eliminate Britain as a European and Middle Eastern Power. It points out that this Soviet policy is very short-sighted, because with British power and influence in this part of the world destroyed, there could be no one to check any possible American aggression which the Soviet seems to fear so much. I can testify that since I have been here, I have never read a line of spontaneous praise of Britain in the Soviet press. But despite the truculence and insolence of the Soviet writers, Britain still shall stand. And the United States, Britain's greatest gift to mankind, alone is able to save Britain and British civilization, for, as Washington once put it, "The New-World shall redress the balance of the Old."

May 21th, 1947:

An amusing story (quite apocryphal of course) is going around diplomatic circles, Molotov is supposed to have asked Marshall during the Conference of Foreign Ministers, "How much does the ordinary American earn?" Marshall; "About 300 dollars a month." "And how much does it cost him to live?" "About 200 dollars a month." "And what does he do with the rest?" "Ah! That is his business." Marshall is then supposed to have asked Molotov: "How much does the ordinary citizen earn here?" "About 1000 roubles a month" "And what does it cost him to live?" "About 2000 roubles a month" "And where does he get the balance?" "Ah! that's his business. This really illustrates the difference between the two systems. Those who thought it out have a very good knowledge of Moscow conditions, because numbers of the lower paid people here have to resort to some form of trading or "speculation," as the Russians call black marketing, to make ends meet.

"Russki Vopros" is now running simultaneously in three Moscow theatres, indicating the strength of the ideological drive against America.

June 24th, 1947:

A new note has appeared in the Moscow press propaganda against the Allies - not the old line about the second front being deliberately delayed, but statements that it would never have been opened at all, except that it was seen by Churchill and others that the Soviet Army itself could have defeated and occupied the whole of Germany. Coupled with this is a statement by a lecturer in Moscow that the industries of Western Germany were deliberately spared (while workers' dwellings were destroyed in France) in order to bring economic pressure on France after the war...

Thursday, July 3rd, 1947

It has been a strange, but a most fascinating interlude in our life. All the time there has been a sense of dark forces striving for complete destruction of the rights of man, of all that Kath and I have been taught to think worth while in life. These forces have not finally triumphed. No one who has lived among them can but love the Russian people, and admire the passive resistance they are maintaining in the war against human personality and the spiritual nature of man.