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Bonosky follows the trail of reporters from the **New York Times**, **Washington Post**, **U.S. News & World Report**, and others—and comes up with some startling evidence and information that none of these papers or magazines expected would ever see the light of day.

It makes good—and sometimes, exciting, other times funny—reading. But the underlying purpose, however, is quite serious: it is to defend the truth and strike a blow for peace.



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BEYOND THE BORDERS OF MYTH:

FROM VILNIUS TO HANOI (1967)

TWO CULTURES (1978)

Phillip Bonosky

**ARE OUR MOSCOW REPORTERS
GIVING US THE FACTS
ABOUT THE USSR?**



PROGRESS PUBLISHERS
MOSCOW

Филлип Боноски
ГОВОРЯТ ЛИ НАМ ПРАВДУ ОБ СССР
НАШИ МОСКОВСКИЕ КОРРЕСПОНДЕНТЫ?

На английском языке

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As always. . .

to my wife and daughter, my son—
and "little Alex."

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PART ONE
THRUST

5

“The trouble with people is not that they don’t know
but that they know so much that ain’t so.”

*Josh Billings’ Encyclopedia
of Wit and Wisdom*

FACT

"Just the facts, Ma'm."

Key line in a popular
American TV drama, *Dragnet*

What is a fact?

According to *Webster's New International Dictionary* (2nd edition, 1951), a fact is:

"1. a thing done; a deed. 2. A doing, making, preparing, or performing. 3. That which has actual existence, whether subjectively or objectively considered; any event, mental or physical; an occurrence, quality or relation, the reality of which is manifest in experience or may be inferred with certainty; more narrowly, an actual happening in time or space. 'Fact' in its primary meaning, as an object of direct experience, is distinguished from 'truth.'"

According to *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (1969), a fact is:

"1. something known with certainty; 2) something asserted as certain; 3) something that has been objectively verified; 4) something having real, demonstrable existence."

According to the *Merriam-Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, a fact is:

"1) a thing done; 2) (archaic), performance, doing; 3) the quality of being actual, actuality; 4) something that has actual existence, an actual occurrence, event; 5) a piece of information presented at having objective reality."

Other American dictionaries do not depart significantly from these definitions.

Let's take a look now at how a Russian dictionary defines the same word "fact," which, in Russian too, is pronounced the same:

ФАКТ-І. Действительное событие, явление, то что произошло в действительности.

2. Данное, являющееся материалом для какого-нибудь заключения, вывода, или служащее проверкой предположения, теории.

3. Утвердительная частица. Употребляется в значении «конечно» «непременно», «действительно» (просторечие).

Д. Н. Ушаков. *Толковый словарь русского языка*, Москва, 1940.

Which can be translated as: "Fact—1. A real event, phenomenon, something that happened in reality; 2. data which is material for any conclusion, inference or serves to test a supposition, or theory; 3. an affirmative particle which is used in the meaning 'certainly,' 'without fail,' 'really' (only colloq.)."

D. N. Ushakov, *Russian-Russian Dictionary of Russian Language—Standard*, Moscow, 1940.

Факт: І. Действительное, вполне реальное событие, явление, то, что действительно произошло.

2. Частица утвердительная и вводное слово. Да, действительно так и есть (прост.)

С. И. Ожегов. *Словарь русского языка*, Москва, 1978.

"Fact: 1. An actual, quite real event, or phenomenon; something that actually occurred.

"2. An affirmative particle and a parenthesis." Yes, really, so it is.

S. I. Ozhegov. *Dictionary of the Russian Language*, Moscow, 1978.

As can be seen at a glance there is very little difference in the definition of "fact" between American and Russian dictionaries.

Why, then, is there so much misunderstanding between Americans and Russians when they use the same word?

If both agree theoretically on what a "fact" is, where does the difference enter?

"WINDOW WASHERS"

"I am not afraid of the press or the militia. I would fight God Almighty himself if he didn't play square with me."

Mother Jones

(Legendary American labor agitator)

What is "news"?

There are two, almost completely opposed, concepts of what "news" is in the world today.

For the press in the capitalist countries—which prefers to call itself a "free press" in the "free world"—it's not news if a dog bites a man. It's news only if a man bites a dog.

So it was no news to that press in 1965-66 that there were 30,000 dog bites recorded in New York City, half of them of children, of whom three out of 10 were bitten on the face.

Similarly, to the bourgeois press (which is the term we will have to use in this account), it's not news when a rat bites a Harlem child. In 1971, 301 Harlem children were bitten by rats. But this fact slipped by in the newspaper night.

To the socialist press, it's not news that a man bites a dog. Sensationalism, eccentric behaviour, abnormal events are not recorded, as a rule, in its pages. The general policy which it follows was expressed by Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in his message to a meeting of journalists in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in 1979: "The primary task of every honest journalist is to use his pen for purposes of peace and progress of the peoples, for ending the arms race, and for extirpating the ideology of militarism, colonialism and racism."

But this is not the stated policy of the "Western" press. There are probably as many definitions as newspapers but one can accept the following characterization of the Western press (since it comes to hand conveniently) as being more or less represen-

tative. It's by Mort Rosenblum, and it appeared in the *International Herald Tribune*, of which he is now editor, on November 14, 1979:

"The Western press is hardly perfect. We set a goal of giving fact without opinion but must, at the same time, provide context and analysis. This somewhat subjective approach to objectivity is vulnerable to human failure.

"But we have a clear purpose. We attempt to assemble facts and to hear as many sides and interpretations as possible in covering an event. To the extent that we keep ourselves out of the elements of judgment, we are good or bad journalists.

"Under this system, readers at least can take comfort in the assurance that responsible journalists, though sometimes in error, do not intentionally mislead.

"With all of its faults and failings, this Western-style system of reporting is the only protection a citizen has, anywhere in the world, from official and private manipulation of the truth."

And as to Moscow reporters: "Up to now, most journalists reporting from Moscow have been seasoned observers, well aware of the particular pitfalls of their sort of window washing. They have learned how to convey sensitive information in clear terms within a system which opposes their style of journalism."

But Mr. Rosenblum has other things to say about his profession in his book, *Coups and Earthquakes* (1979), whose title comes from the traditional American attitude toward news about the rest of the world, which has served as a guideline to editors for generations: "All anyone cares about is coups and earthquakes."

But to get back to Rosenblum's newspaper credo. "We attempt to assemble facts and to hear as many sides and interpretations as possible in covering an event. . ."

In a study of just that point of Rosenblum's own paper, the *International Herald Tribune*, published in Paris, Olaf Stanford examined a month's (September 11 to October 8, 1978) issues of the IHT* and found "more than 130 reports, articles and pieces of information" had appeared in that paper for that month about the socialist world, most of it about the U.S.S.R.

* Published in February 1979 in the *World Marxist Review*.

Stanford reported that out of 50 items devoted to socio-political life in the socialist countries, 30 dealt with . . . "dissidents." The other 20 items informed the *Herald Tribune* readers, who, by the paper's own admission, are mainly American corporation executives posted in Europe, that everybody "behind the iron curtain" was mad about blue jeans, had only (anonymous) slanderous things to say about Communism, Communists, Communist leaders, and so on.

Says Stanford: "In about 30 items carried by IHT during the four weeks the writers fuss over the alleged build-up of the Warsaw Treaty armed forces, supplementing, specifying, and rewriting each other. It does not matter that their information is contradictory. Evidently, as the newspaper's editors see it, the important thing is not facts (there is nowhere they can be gotten from) but the constantly repeated idea that the Russians are arming, that the 'Russians are marching'."

What was true for that month, Stanford implied, was typical of the stories before and most certainly after.

So something is wrong!

I asked Vitali Korionov, political observer for *Pravda*, the leading Soviet newspaper, how he would define the news.

He said: "Every boss of a magazine or newspaper in the U.S. approaches news from the interest of the class he serves." If asked, Mr. Rosenblum would no doubt deny that classes exist in the U.S.A.—"only pressure groups"—much less that his newspaper serves one. "*New York Times*," went on Korionov, "does not publish all the news that happens. It selects. It selects news in its favour."

I reminded him that the slogan of *New York Times* is "All the news that's fit to print."

He replied: "It does not publish *all* the news. It selects. What it selects depends on its class interests. Even its slogan 'fit to print' implies selection, judgment, bias. That is the principle behind the selection of news—what's in their class interest. Naturally, in the news selected about the U.S.S.R. positive features are eliminated.

"The Soviet people are involved in peaceful, creative work. They want to live in peace. But you don't often read material in your bourgeois papers saying that. You cannot find truthful

information in your bourgeois papers about how our people work because that would not favor the capitalist world.

“Instead, we see only stories about the ‘Soviet threat,’ the ‘Soviet menace.’ But there are never any facts to back up a ‘Soviet threat’ story, so what do they do? They have to invent them. This is not information—this is *disinformation*.

“We of course approach the question of Soviet reality (in *Pravda—P.B.*) from a different position. We’re doing our best to show the actual world in which the Soviet citizen lives. It’s a creative world—a world of work—and it’s just enough to look at any issue of our paper to see that. . .”

And he showed me a list of issues of *Pravda* and the stories that were featured. At that time (December, 1979), featured were stories of bumper cotton harvests in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Earlier, there had been a bumper grain harvest, in a year that generally had been a bad one for grain, in Kazakhstan.

“Today, December 7, the first page,” he said, “is dedicated to the cotton pickers of Tajikistan. Comrade Brezhnev sent his greetings—and the report says that Tajik people got in 888,000 tons of cotton, the first time ever for them. That’s No.1 news.

“*The New York Times* won’t put that kind of news on the front page. For us, such news is like a beautiful song. . .”

And he leafed through a week’s issues of *Pravda*, and summed up: “So what was the international news from *Pravda* that week (December 2 through 9th)? It was the struggle going on against the U.S. plan to distribute rockets in Europe. And we not only tell our readers how the struggle is going on but we try to present the information in such a way that it not only helps them to keep up with the struggle but deepens their understanding of it as well. That’s the article. It should help mobilize people in the struggle against the U.S. threat.”

Mr. Rosenblum would not agree.

“We do not publish the kind of negative stories published in the bourgeois press. We do not try to turn a robber or a killer into a news item. Why does the bourgeois press feature such stories? Because they want to divert the people’s attention from the key questions of their lives. Thus, the robbery, the rape, the killing—to divert attention.

“Do we have negative phenomena? Of course we do! Are we

waging a fight against them? Yes! But in what way? Not by featuring individually such stories. We'll fight the negative phenomena as a whole.

"We concentrate more on the neglect of people's rights by managers and bureaucrats. Suddenly, for instance, you won't be able to find some commodity in the stores. We'll write about that. Yes, we'll write up such facts and name names and places—who's responsible—and what positions they have. ¶

"Of course the bourgeois press says that the Soviet press does not criticize members of the government. That's not true. Have you read Brezhnev's speech at the plenum? He mentioned more than ten high members of the government. Brezhnev was not shy about naming these highly-placed ministers openly.

"We will fight against bureaucracy—bribery—drunkenness—and we will give names and places. But we will not sensationalize, we will emphasize instead the political side of each question.

"Our articles are intended to mobilize people against such phenomena.

"Yes, we know that sometimes in the West they will say that a worker can criticize Carter but here not Brezhnev. It's not that you're not allowed to criticize Brezhnev. It's simply that, unlike Carter, he carries out a policy that has been overwhelmingly approved by the Soviet people themselves.

"The 'criticism,' if any, would more logically be addressed to the policy, whose formation is the business of the people themselves through their social organs.

"Every Communist here at his meeting can criticize any minister, any party secretary, high or low, any section or district organizer, and not only Communists, but all Soviet citizens can do this.

"*Pravda* itself publishes letters of criticism from readers. In these letters names are named, shortcomings are listed, where and what took place in what town or plant.

"Every critical letter is carefully studied by the party organization of the area and there will be results, ranging from a criticism of the responsible party member up to expulsion from the party, even up to imprisonment! We get about 500,000 letters a year. An American can be critical of Carter and nothing will come

of it. *Pravda* will publish a letter of criticism and, believe me, there will be action!"

Perhaps it's unkind of me, at this point so early in this book, to note the fact that in 1976, during the CIA exposes, it was revealed that John Hay Whitney, owner of the *International Herald-Tribune* (Paris) was a director of a news service called Forum World Features, which was registered in Delaware, U.S.A., but operated out of London. Whitney is Rosenblum's boss. Unfortunately, it was revealed that no such thing as Forum World Features existed. It was a pure CIA-funded and -operated fictional outfit. It fed newspapers, not only the *Herald Tribune*, a farrago of invented "news" items that ranged all the way from "black" to "gray," and even "white" when "white" could serve as well. Mr. Whitney never did explain his connection with this outfit and to this day nobody has heard a word from him about it. Silence here can be taken for admission of guilt.

As for *Pravda*, what can we expose about its backing and financing?

Well, *Pravda* is a newspaper published in the Soviet Union and funded by Soviet money. It serves the interests of socialism, at home and abroad—openly, as a partisan, committed. It makes no pretense of being "independent," "objective," or "unbiased."

However, one other point remains unjoined. Mr. Rosenblum stated that with all its failings, nevertheless the Western press is more likely, with its particular approach to the news, to bring the reader the "truth."

And Mr. Korionov, for his part, is quite sure that his—and the whole socialist world's—approach to the news is far more likely to bring readers the truth.

And what is the truth?

IMPORTING THE "YELLOW PERIL"

"A gentle knight was pricking on the plain."

Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*

Let's begin in our search for the truth with a man no longer in Moscow, Robin Knight. We will take up a considerable amount of space discussing Mr. Knight's writings, but we promise the reader that it won't all be tough sledding. For though a certain dryness is inevitable—even boredom!—in following the journalistic footsteps of your typical Moscow correspondent, in this instance I can promise the reader that if he sticks through the dull spots, there'll be a reward waiting for him at the end.

Because before we're through with Mr. Knight, we'll have met spies and their cloaks-and-daggers, a Micky Finn slipped into Uzbek tea, a rape that did (or didn't?) take place in a Tashkent tearoom, the mystery of a strange photograph, and other assorted goodies that add zest to one's appetite for what is after all the main, not particularly dramatic purpose of this book—to give you the good rye bread of simple truth.

Until he left in June, 1979, Robin Knight represented *U.S. News & World Report*, a glossy weekly of opinion reflecting ultra-conservative political views, with easy entry into the Pentagon, FBI and CIA recesses, as well as the inner circles of the Republican Party.

We start with an article in the September 11 (1978) issue of that magazine entitled, "Racism in Russia: Old Fears, Hates Linger."

Knight states flatly in this piece that racism is the "centuries-old antipathy that most Russians hold toward Asians—particularly Chinese—as well as Jews and blacks." (Blacks is put in lower case—*P.B.*).

This is an extraordinarily sweeping statement. Since it is an

indictment of an entire people—not only for today but for “centuries”—of the vilest kind of hatred and since it flies in the face of not only Soviet policy but of Marxism itself—the least one would have expected from Mr. Knight to buttress such a serious charge are some facts—some hard, independently-verifiable facts. In so serious a matter, personal impressions alone are not enough.

But does Mr. Knight help us in any way to form our own judgment? Does he give us even a single fact where we can hang our hat on at least while we go looking? Can we touch anything he shows us, weigh it, see it, measure it by some standard that people accept as more or less scientific?

Not one! Not even *one*!

His problem, to begin with, is that there are no facts he can point to to back up his charge. They just don't exist. But since his assignment is to prove the unprovable he has only one possibility to resort to: magic.

The first annoying difficulty that stands in Mr. Knight's way is the fact—and here is a fact—that whatever Soviet newspaper you read, whatever book or magazine, listen to whatever radio program, or look at whatever TV show, or listen to any official spokesman—you will neither read nor hear any statement or allusion whatsoever that can be stigmatized, even remotely, as racism. Oddly enough Mr. Knight admits this: “Soviet officials do not use racist terminology in their speeches, nor does the press.”

From him, however, all this sounds like a plot. For: “But ordinary Russians speak of the ‘yellow peril’...”

And that's it—no more no less. The entire media, all officials, all public spokesmen “do not use racist terminology” but “ordinary Russians” do!

And how does one prove that “ordinary Russians” do? One doesn't prove it—one asserts it. It is, at least for the purposes of his magazine, a safe assertion to make for such a statement is, of course, impossible to prove or disprove without a house-to-house check.

This is—what shall we call it? Fraud? The second fraud that Mr. Knight commits in this same article is in the use of the phrase “yellow peril.”

It's important to linger over this for a moment because it illustrates a device very frequently used by other correspondents as well.

It begins as an apparently innocent desire of the correspondent to help his reader understand a new, unfamiliar phenomenon by bringing in an old, familiar experience as a comparison—to get a handle on the new by the help of the old.

But this device can be abused—corrupted. Knowing that American audiences have little understanding of Soviet reality, American journalists in Moscow try to bring them ostensibly “closer” to it by pretending that in some respects it's the same as American.

Here's how it works with “yellow peril.”

“Yellow peril” has its origins in the vicious anti-Chinese campaigns in America, especially in the West after the Civil War. In 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed, incidentally, with the pious declaration by the then leader of the Federation of Organized Trade Unions, Samuel Gompers, that it was needed to “protect” white American-born labor, made it illegal for the Chinese to enter the U.S.A. As late as the middle 30s, only 800 Chinese annually were permitted legally to enter, and even this number was opposed by George Meany in the name of “protecting” that same “American labor.”

Chinese workers in America had always been treated with signal brutality and remorselessly exploited. They were underpaid, under-fed, and driven by every means, including whipping, to work, mainly on the railroads of the West. They were discriminated against openly, often lynched, and politicians made their reputations and won elections with anti-Chinese slogans and platforms. They were expelled bodily from whole communities, jobs were restricted, and because so many were “illegally” in the country they could be preyed upon by villains of every stripe with no fear either of the law or of reprisals from the Chinese. So hated were the Chinese (and later, the Japanese and Filipinos) that quite literally they lived frightened, persecuted and desperately lonely lives (legal marriages were not permitted between Chinese because, though Chinese men were sometimes tolerated, Chinese women were not). There were no schools for their children and the only social life they had in their ghettos was

what they themselves created. The organizations they set up, including the notorious "tongs," became proof, as proof was needed, of their mysterious and non-Caucasian ways, totally inaccessible to the white mentality and evidence therefore that they were racially inferior to the whites and thus—as always in America—inevitably the logical butt of persecution, cultural and social ostracism.

As with all other minorities in America a glossary of insulting, denigrating terms came into existence about Chinese (and Japanese and Blacks and Italians and Poles and Hungarians and Indians and Swedes and . . . and . . .), which persist to this day. And, in fact, Chinese still live in ghettos, are still outside the American Pale and still feel, outwardly and inwardly, that they are not, and can never successfully be, Americans.

Newspapers, particularly the Hearst press, invented the term "yellow peril," in order to keep those Chinese coolies doing all the hard and dirty work outside the social Pale. As pariahs they could be more easily fleeced. But the "yellow peril" was also aimed at keeping immigration barriers against Orientals intact. The specter of a "yellow peril"—of Orientals inundating and "mongrelizing" the American "race"—was a political weapon that played a despicable role in American politics for a long time. Meanwhile, most of the Chinese who were already in the U.S.A. could be deported practically at sight. But they worked hard. As the whole world knows our railroads are laid on Chinese bones.

Therefore, to switch this phrase, so drenched in specific American racism, to the Soviet scene under the pretext that it somehow explains or clarifies an aspect of Soviet reality, is fraudulent.

But it's common practice for Moscow journalists to smuggle in American prototypes of social evils into the Soviet scene. This is not to say that certain social evils do not exist in the Soviet Union. It is merely to say that they are *Soviet* and not American—and this is not a mere distinction without a difference, as we shall see.

The fact is that if the unwary reader accepts the phrase "yellow peril" as given to him, then what happens is that he finds himself reacting to *it* under the impression that he's reacting to something *Soviet*.

He's been conned. Russian relations to the Chinese are very

specific to Russian history and there is no point in that history that repeats the American. To understand Soviet reality, one must study it in its own terms, not by analogy.

Actually the Russians have not a "centuries-old antipathy" toward the Chinese. Without idealizing or glamorizing the past, nevertheless even a tyro in Russian-Chinese relations is struck by the fact that those relations show extraordinarily few instances of major clashes between the two peoples, and even less evidence that there was a "centuries-old" animosity, based apparently on racial antagonisms alone, as Mr. Knight so casually states.

The Soviets have published extensive material on these relations, the latest, in 1978, being "Russo-Chinese Relations in the 18th Century," Volume I. "The facts of history ascertained with documents are irrefutable proof of the long-standing traditions of good-neighborly relations between the Russian and Chinese peoples," wrote *Izvestia*, commenting on this series (November 20, 1979).

This is what one has to refute if one expects to be taken with even a grain of seriousness in charging that the Russians have always hated the Chinese for racist reasons.

I am indebted to V. Myasnikov, of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies, for his reminder that as far back as 1867, no other than Karl Marx himself wrote: "Russia's relations with the Chinese Empire are very peculiar. . . Since the Russians did not conduct sea-trade with China, they were never interested in disputes on this question, they never interfered in them in the past and are not interfering now; therefore the Chinese do not feel an aversion for the Russians which they do feel since time immemorial for all foreigners who invaded their country from the sea. . ." which would be England, first of all, and then later, the United States.

What hostility exists today has arisen out of contemporary politics. And that distrust has arisen, not because the Russians "hate" the Chinese on racist grounds—seeing them as a "yellow peril," as defined by William Randolph Hearst, Sr.,—but for specific political reasons created by the Chinese leaders themselves.

The Soviet Union itself has a vast Oriental population, and one of the most remarkable epics in all history is the story of how the Russians (after the revolution) saved millions of Asians

from extinction, encouraged their growth, helped bring them into the modern world as prosperous, cultured and developed nations. Look at the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Kazakhs, just to name a few.

Soviet relations with Mongolia are another striking case in point. Mongolians are certainly "yellow." In fact, the Chinese today claim large sections of Mongolia as part of China. But Soviet relations with Mongolia, which began with their aid to the Mongolian revolution in 1921, have been warm and friendly, as they have been with other "yellow" peoples—to name just the Vietnamese, for instance.

It was, in fact, the Bolsheviks who gave decisive aid to the Chinese Communist Party, and it was precisely Lenin whose theoretical and practical understanding of the problems of the Chinese revolution helped pave the way for its eventual victory. It was only when the Chinese leadership, under the influence of Mao Zedong, departed from the revolutionary line, at the heart of which was cooperation with the Soviet Union, that the Chinese took the direction which has landed them in the arms of imperialism and at daggers drawn with the socialist countries and revolutionary world.

The Soviets also delivered the decisive military strike that destroyed the Japanese army in Manchuria in 1945. That victory, which dealt a body blow to Japanese resistance, also helped bring the war in the Pacific to an end sooner, and thus, not incidentally, saved American lives as well.

After the victory—and once the Kuomintang under Chiang Kai-shek was gone—the Soviets gave the Chinese not only food, but money, experts, and enormous equipment which the Soviets themselves badly needed. Most of it was donated free of charge. Between 1954 and 1962, for instance, the Soviets gave the Chinese some 1,400 designs for construction projects, more than 24 sets of scientific-technical papers worth millions of dollars, 5,500 sets of blueprints for manufacturing machines, and some 1,500 packages of documents for organizing production.

The Soviets helped build more than 250 major and key industrial enterprises, which literally became the core of China's industrial growth. Thousands of Chinese came to the U.S.S.R. to study, just as thousands from ex-colonial countries do today. Other

socialist countries also helped China, building some 85 important industrial enterprises without which it was useless to talk of industrializing China at all.

In those days the Chinese made no bones about admitting receiving such critical aid, and when I visited Changsa in Manchuria in 1959, the head of the automobile works there (who had once worked at Ford's in Detroit) cheerfully admitted—no, boasted—that it was the Soviets—the Chinese's "elder brother"—who built the factory, donated the blueprints—several carloads of them—and brought the know-how with them not only to set up the factory and make it run but to train Chinese workers to take over when they left! This made it possible for China to manufacture its own badly-needed trucks, cars and tractors.

To say, therefore, that the Russians are anti-Chinese on racial grounds—that they fear the "yellow peril"—is sheer slander. The Chinese are to be feared not for their color but for the fact that their leaders have betrayed their Communist origins and have banded together with the erstwhile "paper tiger," American imperialism, in an effort to dominate the world, even if it leads to war!

The only "proof" for Knight's wild allegations of Soviet racism that he produced was a quote from *Literary Gazette*.

Wrote Knight: "...and a recent edition of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (he gives you the Russian name in the hope of gaining more credibility) described China's leaders this way: 'Their lack of political principles, their duplicity and cynicism, are known to the whole world. Their reliability is deceitful. Perfidious stabs in the back are their way of operating,'"—which, regrettably enough, sounds to us, and to anyone in the least familiar with the history of the Soviet-Chinese relations since, at least 1960, as a fairly mild description of the facts. Not only have the Chinese leaders betrayed their own revolutionary principles and history, they have set a course in international affairs that is pointed toward war. Nor do they try very hard to hide the fact that they look forward to war—between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., of course!—and boast that they, the Chinese, "will sit on the mountain" and watch the tigers tear each other apart "in the valley," and when both are dead, or disabled, they expect to step in and take over. Not

only have they been perfidious in the past, they promise future perfidy as well—and to the Americans this time!

As far as the deterioration of relations between the Soviet Union and China are concerned, the record will show that China's leadership is completely to blame. More than once the Soviet leadership has suggested meetings with China to discuss disputed questions, including signing a mutual non-aggression pact (a safeguard any party actually fearing attack would leap at!). But China has turned down all Soviet moves to de-fuse the situation.

If to take another notorious example, how is one to interpret their relations with Vietnam except as perfidious? During the American aggressive war against Vietnam, the Chinese were already planning to steal their victory from the Vietnamese—or prevent it altogether. Once the Vietnamese emerged victorious, the Chinese set up a puppet state in Kampuchea and encouraged a policy of genocide there—to make room for the expanding Chinese—that bears comparison only with Hitler's policy of *lebensraum*—room in the East for the Germans.

What is it but perfidy when Chinese leaders say one thing to the face of the Burmese and at the same time encourage bands of guerrillas to continue attacking Burma? And India! The Chinese at this very moment still occupy thousands of miles of Indian territory they took by force during the 60s.

Having proved nothing by his charges except his own lack of principle, Mr. Knight in the same article then goes on to declare: "It is this widespread fear of the Chinese, plus the scarcely concealed dislike of blacks and Jews, that explains why most Westerners (most?—what polls or statistics? what *facts?*—*P.B.*) agree with President Carter's comment last May about racism in the Soviet Union. He said that the Kremlin ultimately will fail in its efforts to dominate Black Africa because an 'innate racism' toward blacks exists in the U.S.S.R."—as usual, no proof, no facts cited, apparently none needed, by Carter whose own fortune was based on underpaid Southern Black labor, living in a part of Georgia where not only couldn't they vote for more than a century (because of a poll tax and educational qualifications) but had no rights whatsoever that any white was bound to observe.

Racism is not to be found in whether one waits overlong

for a table in a restaurant (as we shall see), but in the most basic of human needs—a job. And where millions are deprived of means of making a living, as in the U.S.A., this is due to nothing else but racism—to the racism that first deprived those millions of Blacks of the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to make a living, and then pointed to the fact that the Blacks did not have those skills—as the reason why they were not eligible for jobs! A classic Catch-22 situation! ♣

Nobody in the Soviet Union has ever been deprived of a job, and what goes with it, the means of acquiring the skills for a job, because of racism—or for any other reason. The contrary is true. All barriers to getting good jobs have been completely removed by law since 1917. Literally millions of non-whites who lived lives of ignorance, poverty and misery during the reign of the Czars, were not only liberated legally by the revolution but were given unlimited opportunities to become educated and to acquire the necessary skills to qualify for good jobs. And the fact that there is no unemployment in the Soviet Union proves that there is no discrimination as well.

WHAT ABOUT BLACKS IN THE U.S.S.R.?

“The stroke of the tongue breaketh the bones.”

Ecclesiastics

Now that the subject of Blacks had been opened, with a stone thrown with catastrophic consequences in the glass house, let's see precisely what Robin Knight had to say about this question in his *U.S. News & World Report*. American Blacks of course (with a few exceptions) do not live in the Soviet Union. Knight is referring to African Blacks, and he says: “Some African students here complain that they have long been victims of racial prejudice.” And, in the very next sentence, the “some” balloons into “many”: “Many say that they encounter personal hostility, particularly when they date Russian girls.”

The article in which this statement appeared also showed a picture of two Blacks looking at a white girl. There is no identification of the Blacks, nor of where the photograph was taken, except that it's possible to see some Russian words in the background, which read: “Welcome” and beneath, presumably the same words, in what must be an African language. (Actually, Estonian.) The caption to the picture reads: “African students in Russia relish free tuition and liberal allowances but complain about racial hostility, encountered particularly when they are dating Russian girls.”

But who these Blacks are, or who the “Russian girl” is, exactly where the picture was taken, what year, or even in what city—of this, not one word. But the implication is that these particular Blacks—who also are stand-ins for *all* Blacks—have actually uttered the statement which is quoted under the picture.

But for all we know these particular Blacks may have the very opposite opinion, and the picture might have been taken in Kiev,

where Blacks also go to school, or in any of the other cities in the Soviet Union where they study. But on that—not a word.

This is—to be charitable—and at this point of our narrative we are inclined still to be charitable—irresponsible journalism bordering on forgery.

Nevertheless, with only the material that Mr. Knight alone supplies us, let's go into it and see what we can make of it.

Mr. Knight manages to get a certain amount of journalistic mileage—or so it would seem—out of “evidence” that nobody can check on—who, what, where, when, why?—and he continues to back up his unproved—and unprovable—statements of racial hostility by quoting yet another source that is equally uncheckable, equally anonymous, and without whose ready service no Western reporter could function at all. And that is the eminently quotable, always epigrammatic, salty—and faceless—“Western diplomat.”

Here, right on cue he comes in: “Of course they're racists. They're anti-black, anti-Semitic and anti-Asiatic”—committing in that single sentence two racial slurs of his own—“Blacks” are put in lower case ‘b’ (and not only in print, in their minds first of all) and Asians are contemptuously referred to as “Asiatic.”

So drenched are “Western diplomats” (and journalists) in “innate racism” that even when they want to accuse others of racism they're unable to do it except in racist terms!

This knee-jerk racism jumps out of not only the typewriters of journalists but of “Western diplomats” as well. And before we go any further, because we're going to meet these anonymous “Western diplomats” over and over in the writings of all the Western correspondents, let's pause here to make his closer acquaintance, and see what he looks like without his mask. (We apologize for the interruption but it's necessary.)

Washington (UPI), January 29 (1980)—Ambassador X, a product of the American Midwest, looked quizzically at his staff members in the U.S. embassy somewhere in Southeast Asia.

“Did you say there are two separate Koreas?” he asked “How come?”

Staff members also swallowed hard when the ambassador

said, "You mean there has been a war between India and Pakistan?"

"Ambassador X. is cited by the author of an article in the *Foreign Service Journal* to point up charges that President Carter had not kept his 1976 campaign promise to stop paying off political debts with diplomatic assignments.

"But United Press International has learned the ambassador is Richard Kneip, a former governor of South Dakota who is now serving as U.S. envoy to Singapore. State Department sources said the author is Edward Ingraham, a respected career diplomat now on temporary assignment at a Midwest university.

"The article says the ambassador had never heard of: Gandhi, Nehru, Sukarno, German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Chiang Kai-shek.

"The author is sharply critical of Carter for raising expectations that his administration was going to change the practice of using embassies for political payoffs. About 70 percent of the current 150 U.S. ambassadors are career diplomats, but the author said some of the political appointees are 'of stunning unsuitability for the job'". . .

But to go back to Knight's earlier quotation from the alleged student for a closer look: "Some African students here complain that they have long been victims of racial prejudice."

What can this mean? That "some African students" have been *victims* of racial prejudice *for a long time*?

Victims? In what way? They "relish free tuition and liberal allowances"—no victimization there, obviously. Where, then? Here it is: "Many say that they encounter personal hostility, particularly when they date Russian girls."

But ponder that for a moment. (Let's forget the "many"—Mr. Knight didn't take any poll of African students—there are thousands of them: his "poll" is in his typewriter.) The first thing that strikes you in that statement is that if one "dates" Russian girls, how does that prove racism? Aren't Russian girls Russian?

But Mr. Knight means more than that. What he is doing by innuendo is slipping the sign to his readers—which they pick up efficiently—that Russian *men* object to Blacks dating Russian

girls. Now, to an American born and bred in a land where Blacks were, and still can be, lynched for even *looking* at a white girl, this makes sense. He feels that he's home—he recognizes the landscape.

But it's America he recognizes, not Russia. He's looking at contraband that has been smuggled into the country: for racism is illegal in the Soviet Union, where it is both officially proscribed and privately denounced.

Undaunted, Mr. Knight goes on to cite further "evidence" of what he calls "prejudice" thusly: "One student gives this assessment of the life of an African in Moscow. 'It's difficult for us here, but it's hard to know how much of this is due to racial prejudice (if the unnamed 'student' himself can't decide what's racial prejudice and what's not, how can Mr. Knight?—*P.B.*) and how much to the general hostility toward foreigners.

" 'I rarely meet much prejudice in shops or on the streets,' (which would seem to cover an awful lot of territory—*P.B.*) 'but I often get stopped from going into restaurants. But that is something that happens to Russians also.' (If it happens to Russians also, how does that prove racial prejudice?—*P.B.*) 'It's easy to forget how badly they treat their own people.' "

And that's it. He's "stopped" sometimes from going into a restaurant, and so are Russians (and so am I).

As everyone will tell you who knows anything at all about Russians, they go to restaurants, especially in the evening, not to snatch a hurry-up 10-minute meal—with the waiter hanging around their table impatient to get them out and a new customer in—but as a social event, to meet friends and spend the whole evening (and often, long afternoons) talking.

Restaurants are not open to make a fast buck. Profit is not the driving motive for their existence. It's not surprising therefore that it's sometimes hard to get a table exactly when you want it. Somebody else has it—and he's in no hurry to get up and go just because you're waiting. And the waiter doesn't care. Tips are not what he lives by.

It's just sheer malice to cite that fact—one of the few facts Mr. Knight grants us—as evidence of "racism." It's evidence of nothing more than the fact that there aren't enough restaurant tables to go round. To say, on top of that, that it is also proof of

“how badly they treat their own people” is—well, what is it? There’s a word for it.

So what do we have so far? “Racism” in Russia is proven by the fact that neither Blacks nor Russians can get a table in a restaurant precisely when they want it. And, two, that if an African dates a Russian girl, that, too, is evidence of racism. But if he didn’t date a Russian girl, what would that prove?

As to the restaurant problem, if Mr. Knight’s anonymous student was still around in 1980, he found that problem more or less solved as well. For by then, some 365 additional “restaurants, cafés, snack-bars, and cafeterias” had been built, making it possible for 103,000 *more* people to eat at the same time!

And as for Russian girls, whether you may date them or not depends on your personal charm.

LUMUMBA UNIVERSITY

"This will last out a night in Russia
when nights are longest there."

Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*

But how do African students actually live in Moscow?

Mr. Knight himself in his article says that there are 15,000 African students in the U.S.S.R. at the time he was writing (1978), and of those some 6,500 attended Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University founded in Moscow in 1960.*

Mr. Knight should have bitten his tongue rather than pronounce the name "Lumumba Friendship University." For it was the American CIA that assassinated the outstanding African freedom-fighter, Patrice Lumumba, in 1960. In 1961, the Soviet Union gave his name to the Peoples' Friendship University, which in its 20 years of existence had graduated thousands of "Third World" students.

Those "Third World" students live somewhat different lives at Patrice Lumumba University than did, for instance, the "Rhodesian" students at Carnegie-Mellon University in the U.S.A. At Lumumba they participate in all the social events of the university itself, and also publicly react to political events, mainly in Africa, as well. To name one instance typical of many. On October 10, 1978, students from 99 countries held a meeting at Lumumba University and adopted a resolution of support for International Day of Solidarity with the political prisoners of South Africa—then and still an ally of the U.S.A., and not incidentally, of Israel and China.

* In 1980, nearly 30 thousand students from more than 100 countries were studying at about 300 higher educational establishments in the Soviet Union. The Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University (total enrollment: 6,700) had 1,003 students from 45 African countries.—*Ed.*

These students at Lumumba University are not groomed to return to their native countries to become puppets. On the contrary, they become active participants in the liberation of their home countries, or if their countries have achieved political independence already, they return to advance the culture and economy of their usually backward—backward because of centuries of colonial oppression and exploitation—native lands with the skills they had acquired in Moscow.

It's true, as Mr. Knight concedes—and cannot help but concede—that all African students are given “free tuition” and “liberal allowances” for the four or five years they spend in the Soviet Union”.* But they get much more than that. They are supplied free of charge winter clothing when they arrive (usually from a hot climate), and they spend their vacations in various last-word-in-comfort resorts throughout the Soviet Union, or take expenses-paid trips back home.

At the same time they are guests of a country whose customs, language, culture and even temperature are markedly different from their own. Some Africans actually come out of a tribal society. Some, from a social system in which women are still to win their equal rights. (These Africans don't look kindly—at this point—on the equality which socialist and many Western women enjoy.) Some find the change—and the stiff study requirements—too tough to handle and go back home. Some are not always honest about their reasons for going back home. But most—those who are serious, who really want to serve their people—stay and put in the necessary hard work.

Incidentally, students who come to study in the Soviet Union are not necessarily chosen by the Soviets. Nor are they necessarily Communists (or even democrats). The African or Asian governments themselves usually choose which among their young people to send. Some are even possibly anti-Communist but recognize the opportunity studying in the Soviet Union gives them to equip themselves with skills and knowledge valuable not only at home but everywhere.

* The university students usually study at the preparatory faculty for a year and from four-and-a-half to six years at various main faculties.—*Ed.*

However, most are anti-imperialist and sincerely dedicated to the freedom and development of their homelands. It is the policy of the Soviet Union to extend a helping hand to all oppressed peoples in the name of internationalism and in the struggle for universal freedom and independence. A free and independent Africa is no threat to the U.S.S.R.! It seems to be to American imperialism.

To counter the Soviet program for African and other "Third World" students, the United States also has a foreign students' educational program. Here is how it worked in one instance:

Pittsburgh, September 26 (1977)—After Lawrence returns to Rhodesia he hopes some day to become a member of the Government that will provide majority rule in the African nation.

A 23-year-old graduate of the University of Rhodesia, Lawrence is one of 25 Rhodesian students who have been selected for a one-year program in the Carnegie-Mellon University Graduate School of Urban and Public Affairs. Lawrence, the son of a community adviser in the Rhodesian internal affairs ministry, has left his home in Salisbury until next May to pursue his interests in economics, industrial psychology and the Rhodesian legal system.

The idea for the Carnegie-Mellon program originated with E. F. Andrews, a vice-president of Pittsburgh-based Allegheny Ludlum Industries, Inc., whose Allegheny Ludlum Steel division turns out stainless steel heavily dependent on Rhodesian chromium. . .

In July Dean Davis and (Associated Dean) Johnson and Mr. Andrews met in Rhodesia with members of the Ian Smith's Government and representatives of other parties in that country.

Then began a selection process for 250 students. . .

(New York Times)

The unusual activity of this "private" steel corporation is explained by the fact that "Government money was not available because of sanctions against Rhodesia."

But the right hand need not know what the left hand is doing. So, in step "private companies" with a unanimous plan, approved by Ian Smith, to train "Rhodesians" in the U.S.A. for service back in Rhodesia, where presumably they will have the proper attitude toward selling chrome to U.S. steel companies.

But it didn't turn out to be so cut-and-dried. For even those students who had been "selected" with such care, and had survived a screening process that would have caught and excluded any grain of pro-Zimbabwe feeling, couldn't stomach it after only a few months at "school."

In November that same year (1977), 19 Africans—all the Africans—of the 25 Rhodesians (Asians, mixed blood, whites who are Europeans) issued the following statement: "The intention of this program is to create a nucleus of pro-Western puppets to stand as a stumbling block against the authentic cause of the people's revolution in Zimbabwe. We unreservedly refuse to be used as tools for safeguarding diabolical foreign interests in our country. This is neither in our interests nor in Zimbabwe's." (*New York Times*, November 7, 1977).

Not a word about dating American girls nor waiting for a seat in a restaurant!

But what do "Third World" students themselves say about their time in Moscow's Lumumba University?

At a get-together at the Moscow Friendship House (1978), among many expressions from African students of gratitude and goodwill to the Soviet people for their generosity, here is Abdou Muhamed Houmed's, from the republic of Djibouti, who had put in two years at Lumumba studying at the Faculty of Engineering to become a geologist: "My republic, which is to mark its first anniversary this year, particularly needs experts in geology. I am proud that the Soviet Union is giving us the necessary knowledge to develop our country's national economy. The years I've spent in the Soviet Union will always be the most memorable for me."

So say thousands. By 1980 it was possible to report that Lumumba University had trained more than 8,500 specialists from 110 countries. The university has about 10,000 teachers, students, post-graduate students, interns and trainees.

It has six main "faculties": engineering, mathematics and

natural sciences, medicine, agriculture, history and philology, economy and law. "The university educates students to become people with an all-round cultural development, active participation in public life, internationalists, genuine patriots of their countries. We are proud that our graduates work successfully for many years in their native countries, helping their people actively to build a new society," said Vladimir Stanis, rector of Lumumba University, at a meeting in September, 1979, of the leaders of the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and of the representatives of countries of tropical Africa.

Actually, the best answer to what Russians themselves feel on the question of other races can be found in statistics. The last census showed that one out of seven marriages in the USSR is a "mixed" one—and in some Soviet republics (of which there are 15) the average of such mixed marriages is even higher.

Millions of Russians are married to women or men who at one time were considered, even as recently as Czarist days, to be pariahs—untouchables. But the Revolution changed all that. Today there are no racial barriers between Soviet citizens in marriage as there is no racial barrier in any other activity. Nelli Kim, world champion gymnast, for instance, is living proof of the fact—she is half-Russian, half-Korean, and all beautiful.

It was, after all, the Soviets who destroyed not only Hitler's hordes but also the philosophy of racism that Hitlerism stood for and practiced genocidally. It was also a fact that the end of fascism and organized racism in Europe opened up the future to the "colored" peoples of Asia and Africa, except in South Africa where racists are still in power.

To top it off, Russia's national poet, Alexander Pushkin, had an African grandgrandfather, who became a naturalized Russian, and one of the tallest mountains in South Russia is called—Paul Robeson mountain!

And meanwhile, in the U.S.A., which W.E.B. Dubois fled—having been clapped into handcuffs at one time to stand trial as "a foreign agent" for his peace activities—a move to make January 15, the birthday of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. into a national holiday was turned down by the House of Representatives. Why? It would "cost too much."

FORGING LENIN

“Why these weeps?”

Artemus Ward's Lecture

Now, let's take out that old nag, “Soviet anti-Semitism,” and trot it once again around the paddock.

Robin Knight's charges of “Soviet anti-Semitism” are a classic instance of what desperation will do to a writer who's been given an assignment but can't find the material. Still, “they” want it—something—back “there.” They're insistent. It's not the moon, they want—not yet—just stories of “Soviet anti-Semitism,” which must be there because—well, because they *say* they're there.

What to do? The man does the only thing he can do: he invents. And in inventing Soviet anti-Semitism he exposes the political reason for needing it.

To wit: under the sub-title “Lenin's Legacy” Robin Knight writes (Sept. 16, 1978):

“Much Soviet anti-Semitism comes directly from Lenin, and thus is a key doctrine in Communist orthodoxy. He made his views clear in a paper on the ‘Nationality Question,’ which he wrote shortly after the revolution. According to Lenin: ‘Jewish national culture is the slogan of rabbis and bourgeoisie... Whoever proclaims it is the enemy of the proletariat...’”

Quite convincing, isn't it? A quote straight from the great revolutionary himself, Lenin, convicting him—and therefore everyone who believes in Leninism—of anti-Semitism! It is so apt, so clear-cut, so damning, you wonder why it never occurred to anybody else to use it. Until you look into the matter yourself.

For the fact is that *there is not one word in the above ‘excerpt’ that is true.* It's a forgery, pure and simple.

To begin with, the "paper" alluded to as written by Lenin is actually one of a whole series of articles Lenin wrote on the *national* question. It is not titled "Nationality Question" but "Critical Remarks on the National Question."* It was written and published at the end of 1913 which, if Mr. Knight doesn't know, others do, including every Soviet schoolboy, was four years *before* the Revolution.

So far, bad research.

But there's worse. The *fact* is, taken as a whole, it's obvious to anyone who actually reads the paper that the thrust of the paper is not against "the Jews" but against those members of the Jewish Bund who were affiliated at that time (before the Revolution) to the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. (When Lenin wrote his polemic no Communist Party by name existed!)**

The *fact* was that Lenin was polemizing against the leaders of the Jewish Bund whose position on the key problems of revolutionary theory was all wrong. It was harmful to the Jewish working class and to the revolution in general.

What was the main disagreement?

F. Liebman, one of the leaders of the Jewish Bund at that time, maintained that it was correct to call for a "Jewish national culture" on a non-class basis.

But Lenin replied that it was *incorrect* not only for the Jews to call for a "national culture" on a non-class basis—which, in reality, was a call for a culture dominated by the bourgeoisie, actually the Zionists—but that it was equally incorrect for *any*—not just Jewish—Marxists to promote such a position. He was polemizing with Jews who considered themselves to be Marxists—revolutionaries—but he was dealing with theory in general.

And what did Lenin actually write?

"Can a Great-Russian Marxist accept the slogan of national, Great-Russian, culture? No, he cannot. Anyone who does that should stand in the ranks of the nationalists, not of the Marxists. Our task is to fight the dominant, Black-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 17-51.

** The R.S.D.L.P. assumed the name of the Communist Party in March 1918.—*Ed.*

Hundreds (“Black-Hundreds” were gangs, much like our KKK, which organized programs against Jews as well as against all revolutionaries.—*P.B.*) and bourgeois national culture of the Great Russians, and to develop, exclusively in the internationalist spirit and in the closest alliance with the workers of other countries, the rudiments also existing in the history of our democratic and working-class movement. Fight your own Great-Russian landlords and bourgeoisie, fight their ‘culture’ in the name of internationalism, and . . . that is your task, not preaching or tolerating the slogan of national culture.”*

Thus, having set down the essence of democratic, revolutionary culture, this *Russian* proves his case by inveighing against “his own” Russian—actually Great-Russian—culture, charging it with being a culture of the landlords, bourgeoisie and . . . anti-Semites.

This section immediately preceded the section which now Robin Knight chooses to quote (in the role of an authority). But even in the section he does quote, Knight leaves out the introductory line, which reads: “The same applies (that is, what applies to working-class Russians in their attitude toward Great Russian culture also applies to working-class Jews in their attitude toward bourgeois Jewish culture—*P.B.*) to the most oppressed and persecuted nation—the Jews.”

A strange way for an anti-Semite to talk! But not strange to understand why this line is omitted by a new-minted defender of the Jews—in the U.S.S.R.!

Mr. Knight starts *his* quotation with the *next* sentence: “Jewish national culture is the slogan of the rabbis and the bourgeoisie.” Here, Robin Knight puts in three dots—he doesn’t think his reader needs to know what more Lenin has had to say—and ends with what seems to be the following sentence: “Whoever proclaims it is the enemy of the proletariat. . .”, again sticking in the three dots.

The final Robin Knight’s masterpiece comes out like this: “Jewish national culture is the slogan of rabbis and bourgeoisie. . . Whoever proclaims it is the enemy of the proletariat. . .”

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 25-26.

But what did Lenin actually write? In the first three dots, Lenin wrote "...the slogan of our enemies," so that the completed line should read: "Jewish national culture is the slogan of the rabbis and the bourgeoisie, the slogan of our enemies." The "our" refers to the working class, to revolutionaries, including Jewish revolutionaries.

But Lenin goes on from there to say: "But there are other elements in Jewish culture and in Jewish history as a whole. Of the ten-and-a-half million Jews in the world, somewhat over a half live in Galicia and Russia, backward and semi-barbarous countries (note that this Russian is calling his Russia "backward and barbarous"—*P.B.*), where the Jews are *forcibly* kept in the status of a caste. The other half lives in the civilized world, and there the Jews do not live as a segregated caste. There the great world-progressive features of Jewish culture stand clearly revealed: its internationalism, its identification with the advanced movements of the epoch (the percentage of Jews in the democratic and proletarian movements is everywhere higher than the percentage of Jews among the population)." (Italics in the original.)*

Quite a different picture!

In the full, complete version this is how Lenin's ideas come out: "Whoever, directly or indirectly, puts forward the slogan of Jewish 'national culture' is (whatever his good intentions may be) an enemy of the proletariat, a supporter of all that is *outmoded* and connected with *caste* among the Jewish people; he is an accomplice of the rabbis and the bourgeoisie."**

So, the actual writings of Lenin prove, not anti-Semitism but the opposite. And, in fact, of course, Lenin was well-known for his attacks on anti-Semitism, for his theoretical articles that exposed the roots of anti-Semitism and the role that anti-Semitism plays in bourgeois politics.

But why did Mr. Knight—and the *U.S. News & World Report*—need to forge a totally fraudulent quotation from Lenin, especially one that can be so easily exposed?

Because the magazine obviously holds its readers in such con-

* *Ibid.*, p. 26.

** *Ibid.*

tempt that it feels it can palm off any fraud on them if it's labeled "anti-Soviet." Who among its readers—corporation executives, die-hard Republicans, Pentagon poops and others—would feel the need to go back to the original and check it with Mr. Knight's version? Read *Lenin*?

So there is an example of how a man can lie with three dots. And the reader must keep this in mind when we meet Mr. Knight later in durance vile, for it will help us to separate the wheat from the chaff, tea from vodka.

THAT "QUESTION" CONTINUED

"But facts are facts and flinch not."

Robert Browning, *The Ring
and the Book*

†

Even so, this does not exhaust the subject, nor does it exhaust Mr. Knight. He goes on in the same article to concoct anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union by other means as well, no less sleazy.

But here it might be well to pause for a moment to call in a witness on this question who, of all witnesses, is least likely to be pro-Soviet: Israel's Menahem Begin.

In his autobiography, *The Revolt*, Begin admits, though grudgingly, it is true, that "I cannot forget, and no Jew should forget, two fundamental facts. Thanks to the Soviet Union hundreds of thousands of Jews were saved from Nazi hands. . .

"Secondly, when the Soviet Union concluded, if only temporarily, that our striving for Jewish independence in Palestine was not a comedy dictated by British imperialism, but a purpose as serious as death . . . it helped us achieve the first stage of our independence." (I can assure you the dots here are strictly to eliminate irrelevant phrases but in no way to distort the meaning of Begin.—*P.B.*)

American Zionists (and those Jews, not to mention American journalists in Moscow, who, while claiming they are not Zionists, nevertheless support Zionist aims) are not even as truthful as this one-time terrorist and sworn enemy of the Soviet Union who owes his very life to those "anti-Semites," the Russians.* For Begin himself was one of those "hundreds of thousands of Jews saved from Nazi hands" by the Russians who took special

* Here and elsewhere, by "Russians" the author means the Soviet people generally and, likewise, by "Russia," the Soviet Union and not only the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.—*Ed.*

measures, after the war broke out and while under deadly attack, to send the Jews to safety behind the Urals. This included thousands of Polish Jews as well.

This Soviet action remains one of the generally unsung sagas of the war years, though Jews then and for some time later did publicly acknowledge their debt to the Soviets. Albert Einstein, for instance, in his U.N. Day Speech on December 10, 1945, expressly noted that the Soviets had opened their borders to tens of thousands of Jews in 1939 and saved them from the Nazis. The Soviets would open their borders again and again—in effect, saving European Jewry. Einstein noted in the same Speech that the Americans and British did little to help the Jews.

What distance then would have to be traveled between Begin's day of salvation from the Nazis by the Soviets to his TV embrace of the man who publicly proclaimed his admiration of Hitler, Anwar Sadat? "Words fail me," Sadat would say in his memoirs "to describe my admiration for Hitlerism. Hitler greatly impressed me and I was greatly struck by the Germanic war-like spirit. . . . When Rommel launched the offensive in the Western desert, he captivated my dreams and inspired me. . . ."

But how does one prove today that one is not anti-Semitic? By supporting a policy of annexation of stolen Arab lands? By supporting the genocide of the Palestinian people?

By such standards, not only is the Soviet Union "anti-Semitic" but so is the overwhelming majority of the human race, which has gone on record, time and time again, through the U.N. and elsewhere, as opposing the present policy of Israel.

An element of insanity enters this question here, however, and logic seems to be the least helpful tool one can use to make sense out of it.

For instance, to prove his charge of Soviet anti-Semitism, Mr. Knight literally twists himself into a pretzel. To wit.

He has just rubbed his hands triumphantly over the successful forgery of a quotation from Lenin and now concludes: "Sixty years later, Soviet Jews—believed to number between 2.5 million and 3 million*—have none of the national rights given such

* According to the 1979 census there were 1,811,000 Jews in the U.S.S.R. which amounts to 0.7 percent of the total population.—*Ed.*

other minorities as the Latvians or Armenians.” (Here, it’s worth pausing to note what is not an unusual method used by anti-Sovieteers—in their eagerness to hoist a lie about one aspect of Soviet life they often let slip a truth about another. But wait until Robin Knight starts talking about those “minorities” directly! Those “rights” he had granted them to prove that the Jews have none will just as speedily be removed.)

He goes on: “There are no Jewish newspapers or magazines.” Just that—flatly. “No Jewish newspapers or magazines.” What, then, are *Sovietisch Heimland* and *Birobidzhaner Stern* if not respectively, a Jewish cultural magazine (and very popular, which Mr. Knight might have picked up, if he was lucky, on his local newsstand) and a newspaper, published in the Jewish Autonomous Region, Birobidzhan, in Yiddish, a language which is flourishing among Jews in the Soviet Union, but not in Israel, where Hebrew is the official language and where Yiddish, up until very recently, is discouraged (and in the U.S.A. where Yiddish publications have been closing their doors one after the other, the latest being the “oldest Yiddish paper in the U.S.,” the “*Freie Arbeiter Stimme*,” which ended 87½ years of publication in November, 1977, because it could only raise \$6,000 of a needed \$25,000 to keep going!)

If Mr. Knight had bothered to look, he might have seen a notice in Soviet newspapers that “The Jewish musical theater has opened in a ceremony in Birobidzhan. . . After the ceremony, the young company presented the premier of the opera ‘Black Bridle for the White Mare’ by Yuri Scherling. . . This is the world’s first opera in the Yiddish language. . . Deputy Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation, composer Alexander Flyarkovsky, who was present at the premier, told a correspondent: ‘The creation of the new national theater is a major event in the cultural life of the Jewish autonomous region, of all our multi-national Soviet Motherland. This is a qualitatively new Jewish theater, musical theater. The company is now working on four new productions. . . The main themes of the repertoire are struggle against fascism, the struggle for internationalism, friendship of the peoples, struggle for peace. . .’ (TASS, November 13, 1978).

True, the above was published after Mr. Knight’s article

appeared, but there's little reason to expect that it would have been noticed by Mr. Knight no matter when it appeared, or that he would have confided the news to his readers. For *this* kind of Jewish theater is the *wrong* kind of Jewish theater. It is anti-fascist, it is a part of the struggle for peace and friendship, which includes friendship with the Arabs, and thus, by Cold War standards, all this puts *such* a theater, Jewish or not, outside the Pale.

Still, why does Mr. Knight flatly say "no Jewish" magazines and newspapers (and theater and books and opera)? Obviously because he has laid down the law—erecting new walls for another ghetto—and that is: if a Jew is a Communist, he is no longer a Jew! A "Jew", by current procrustean demands, is one who hates Arabs, is racist, supports every reactionary force in the world, is anti-Soviet and anti-Communist. If he is anti-fascist, pro-socialist, and anti-imperialist, he is not, by these standards, a Jew. What is this if not a species of anti-Semitism itself?

Knight goes on to lament that "no Hebrew classes are held in public schools. . ." but forgets to remember that in the United States Jewish education is also in an acute crisis. Jews simply don't want to study Yiddish let alone Hebrew. Between 1967 and 1971, the number of students enrolled in all types of Jewish schools in the U.S.A. registered an 18 percent drop. Between 1971 and 1974, there was "only" an 11 percent drop—but overall enrollment kept dropping. (Then, before full-blown inflation, a year of school for Jewish children cost \$2,000.)

Why, then, should the Jews in the Soviet Union want to study Yiddish or Hebrew more desperately than do Jews in the U.S.A.?

Knight goes on to charge that "fewer than 100 synagogues are open today in the Soviet Union," without noting the possibility that, among Jews as among all Soviet peoples, church-and temple-attendance has fallen dramatically over the years as people become less religious—a world-wide phenomenon—and social pressure to enroll in a religious organization in order to be "accepted" or even to get a job, is removed. Why must Soviet Jews be forced to be more religious than American?

Churches and temples have closed, as they close in America, because there is no longer any constituency to support them. But if "closing" of synagogues is supposed to be governmental

policy, why leave even "fewer" than 100 open? Either you close them or you don't.

The Soviet government does not shut down churches and synagogues arbitrarily. Nor is there antagonism between religious and political forces. On the contrary, in the Soviet Union today all the leading religious personalities of all the various denominations firmly support the Soviet system and are notably active in the peace movement as well, where their influence is considerable. In fact, a *modus vivendi* between church and state, was established by the revolution, and though in the beginning it had its rocky moments, today it functions quite well.

On the question of religious freedom, the new Soviet Constitution, adopted in 1977, after months of intensive debate involving literally the whole population, explicitly states:

"Article 52. Citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess or not to profess any religion, and to conduct religious worship or atheistic propaganda. Incitement of hostility or hatred on religious grounds is prohibited.

"In the U.S.S.R. the church is separated from the state, and the school from the church."

Article 36 says:

"Citizens of the U.S.S.R. of different races and nationalities have equal rights.

"Any direct or indirect limitation of the rights of citizens or establishment of direct or indirect privileges on grounds of race or nationality, and any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness, hostility or contempt are punishable by law."

According to V. Furov, Vice-Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs under the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, "there are nearly 20,000 religious societies in the Soviet Union which represent more than 40 different religious dominations. Believers . . . have the right to the free use of special prayer-houses or the use of other rented premises for worship. They have the right to elect executive bodies from among their members to run the affairs of the society, to pool their money and to collect voluntary

donations among the society members in prayer-houses for purposes connected with the satisfaction of their religious needs.”

And: “Soviet law regards as a criminally punishable offense the refusal to hire or admit to school, discharge from work or school, deprivation of any privileges and preferences granted by law or any other major restrictions of citizens’ rights on ground of their religious attitude.” (In answer to questions of a reporter, as published by Novosti Press Agency, September 25, 1978.)

As though aware himself that his listing of “persecution” and “prejudice” against Jews was all nonsense, Knight sums up the state of Jews in the Soviet Union in these (for him) unlikely words:

“For all the prejudice, however, Jews are far from being a downtrodden, declining force in Soviet life. Most Soviet Jews are well educated and play a disproportionately important role in medicine, education, industry and the performing arts.”

That would seem to be that! It would seem to bear out—and from the mouth of a professional anti-Sovieteer—the truth of the statement by V. Furov and verify the clause in the Soviet Constitution as meaning exactly what it says.

But logic has nothing to do with it. Incidentally, the “disproportionately important role” that Jews play in key areas of Soviet life that Knight reports, is language often susceptible to anti-Semitic implications. Why “disproportionate”? What “proportion” of Jews in what fields is “proportionate”? The Soviets set no “proportions” to Jewish participation in social life but apparently Knight feels that they should. In other words, he’s asking for quotas—since Jews in the U.S.S.R. make less than one percent of the population, according to him, it would be more “proportionate” to allow only less than one percent among scientific workers, where Jews are actually 5.7 percent, or among cultural workers, where they have a representation of 5.2 percent, 6.5 percent in the field of writers and journalists, 3.4 percent of medical workers, and 6.7 percent among lawyers. And why not start at the source? In the 1978-79 academic year there were 196 students in higher schools for 10,000 in general population. But Jews have 329 per 10,000. Which means that of all

the nationalities in the Soviet Union the Jews have the highest proportion of educated members. Where then does prejudice begin?

But this is only half the story. The fact is that the revolution, (headed by Lenin) liberated the Jews from the ghettos of Czarist Russia. Restricted under the Czar to a handful of professions, and forbidden by law to own land, Jews not only freely entered all the professions after the revolution but became farmers as well—which most had not been for some 2,000 years.

Between 1925 and 1935 Jewish farmers increased from 111,060 to 270,000 and Jews to this day continue to work on farms everywhere.

There was a similar rise among Jews as factory workers. In the 13 years period between 1926 to 1939, the number of Jewish workers rose from 153,000 to 689,000.

Nevertheless, Jews retain their urban traditions, and in Moscow alone there are some 250,000 who are not just statistics but active participants in all fields and professions.

Nor is it irrelevant, in view of the charges made by Knight against Lenin (clumsily, it's true, but others are more skillful) to remind readers that it was precisely on Lenin's motion that the Jews were given full freedom in revolutionary Russia.

Lenin initiated actions against anti-Semitism as almost one of the first of his revolutionary acts, in 1917. Anti-Semitism, as well as discrimination on any religious or national grounds, was then outlawed.

Later, in 1919, he would say in a speech: "The capitalists strive to sow and foment hatred between workers of different faiths, different nations and different races... Only the most ignorant and downtrodden people can believe the lies and slander that are spread about the Jews... Shame on those who foment hatred towards the Jews, who foment hatred towards other nations."

He made many such statements, which were more than just statements. For it was again on Lenin's initiative that the national policy which has proven to be historically so successful—allowing more than 100 nationalities to live in harmony and peace where for centuries there had been only hatred and strife—was adopted by the Bolshevik party as its basic policy on this

question, and later it became the law of the Soviet Union itself, and still remains the law.

It is, in fact, the basic policy of *every* Communist Party in the world. Discrimination against any individual on religious or national grounds, on grounds of sex or race, or any other discriminatory grounds, is condemned by every Communist Party in the world, and where these parties are in power, these principles are enshrined in law. Indeed, if Israel were to become revolutionary, a solution to the Arab-Jewish antagonism would soon be found.

Everything that has so far been cited, both by Robin Knight and myself, goes to prove, if logic has anything to do with it, that Jews in the Soviet Union fare quite well, have every opportunity to rise in their profession, to get a good education, and to realize themselves fully as Soviet citizens and, if they choose, as Jews—though many, as census figures show, have become assimilated into the general population through inter-marriage.

And yet, despite the admitted facts that add up to the conclusive fact that the status of Jews in the Soviet Union by no stretch of the honest imagination—though malice may do it—can be called discriminatory, or in any sense, second-class, still Mr. Knight, with apparently no memory of what he had himself admitted in the self-same article, concludes: “But to many Jews (but *how* many? where are the figures?—*P.B.*) these positive features are overshadowed by the widespread discrimination and hostility they encounter every day of their lives. Jews here, just as in centuries past, still are the target of the crudest abuse”—though no instances are cited, not even as “gross” a case as that of the African student who had to wait until there was an empty table in a restaurant!

No country owes any of its citizens a better life than what is justly theirs as a result of work or talent. By this standard, Jews in the Soviet Union live not only well but more than well.

Why, then, the continued campaign in the American press to “prove” that anti-Semitism is the norm of life in the Soviet Union?

One would think that professional Jews like those in B'nai B'rith who so jealously eye the lives of Jews everywhere in the world would seize on the good life Jews lead in the Soviet Union

with yelps of joy, that they would publicize every bit of evidence that they live well, salute the way of life that is so good to them, and bugle it to the world.

But they don't.

The reason why they don't is, unfortunately, very simple. Zionism—and America's Middle-East policy—demand it. It is they, and not the Soviets, who need anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union! And where it doesn't exist, it must be made to exist, one way or the other. If it can't be shown to exist officially, it must be asserted to exist privately. If a long list of achievements by Jews is given, and good jobs enjoyed by Jews cited—this must be brushed aside contemptuously and demands made instead that proof of persecution be produced, without which neither Zionism nor American policy will be satisfied. This stubborn insistence on the existence of Soviet anti-Semitism almost amounts to a demand that it be created where it doesn't exist.

But, one is inevitably asked, if it's so good for the Jews in the U.S.S.R., why do they leave?

Money is the ready answer, but not the only answer. True, the myth lives on. There's still the widespread notion among the world's Jews that if you open up your push-cart in January on New York City's lower East Side, selling shoestrings and razor blades, by year's end, you are Gimbel's or Macy's selling hi-fi's and color TVs.

A campaign of letter-writing has been organized by Jews not only in the U.S.A. but in Israel as well. These letters, often to Jews in the U.S.S.R. who are unknown to the writers, are masterpieces of fiction. They describe life in America (less so, now, in Israel where the dream has faded) as still the gleaming paradise of opportunities lost to the rest of the world, where rewards are instant and penalties few.

They cite American incomes that, by translation into Soviet rubles, seem fantastic. They neglect to inform their pen pals that the American dollar has to do far more work for the average American than the Soviet ruble has to for the average Soviet citizen. As for instance: it has to pay for rent that is astronomical by Soviet *and* by American standards. It has to pay for health services, which are free in the U.S.S.R. and so the Soviets never think about it. (If you tell a Soviet that it costs

over \$200 a day in a hospital, he will look at you uncomprehendingly: the fact goes past him. The triumph of America is also that its problems are so out of proportion to most people's experience that they simply can't be grasped—are therefore not real.) The dollar has to pay for vacations, for highly overpriced furniture, for a thousand-and-one new and novel expenses he had never even heard of as a Soviet citizen—expenses that are generated by American life and exist nowhere else. He will have to pay highly-inflated prices for food that, compared to Soviet food, is tasteless, lacks nutrition, and perhaps is even a cancer agent.

Those letter-writers do not tell their Moscow friends that though America is free there's nothing free in it. Nor do they tell them that it is not advisable to walk in Central Park (or any park in any city in America) even in the day-time unless you have vicious dog at your heels. And when their teen-age boy brings home his first pornographic magazine or book, these letter-writers never think to tell their Soviet clients how they will then feel. Nor how they will feel when those same children come home one day smelling with a sickly-sweet odor, which they had never smelled in the Soviet Union, and are told that it's just a drug—and not a deadly one—marihuana. Would you like a joint?

And when they go to the corner newsstand and see a copy of the *White Citizen* calling for the death of Jews, or watch a parade of KKKers calling for the same thing, nobody will have warned them in advance that this is not what it seems—fascists calling for their death—but an amazing example of American democracy at work.

And what will they do when their sons and daughters come to them one day and tell them they're bored with their Jewish notions—that they can't stand the fact that their parents are so slow to become Americans, to speak correctly, to wear the right clothes—and so they have now decided to become Born-Again-Baptists, or Jews-for-Jesus, or have decided to run off to a “commune” where boys and girls mingle together like a colony of worms and nobody knows whom the baby belongs to?

And when one day they are stopped in the street with a knife

at their throat and a voice hisses in their ear: "Your money or your life!" they will truly know what it means then to be an American. For your money *is* your life. And when, years ago, a radio comedian (Jack Benny), reproducing this same episode, "answered" this question with a long, long silence, the whole country broke into laughter, recognizing in the weighing silence the typical American dilemma.

But useless to cite these facts! For those Soviet Jews are too cunning to be fooled by others. The stories in their press they discount. It's natural for one side to belittle the other side, they reason. They, on the contrary, will listen only to the facts—the figures. For if the average wage of an American worker is \$200 a week, and of the Soviet about 50 rubles—how can one possibly lose with this?

Let the expenses be what they may—one realizes that things *are* more expensive in America—but how expensive can they be, after all—when rents are about 3 percent of a family's income, heat expenses are negligible, vacations are defrayed by one's trade union, meals at work are cheap, the doctor comes when he's called and if he's paid at all, it's with a box of candy, as a present, if one wishes.

But that's *Soviet*—you tell them. And they shrug. Oh, yes, they forgot. But even so, with an income of more than 10,000 rubles a year—"but you don't get rubles, you get dollars." "All the better!"—how expensive can things really be? With such an income, one must have a great deal left over to live the life of royalty, surely!

So, they won't go into Central Park after dark—nor even in daylight. There must be other parks. . .

So, too cunning to let others fool them, they fool themselves. This self-deception begins much earlier, of course—it begins the moment they realize that they, even they, have something somebody wants badly—a new, amazing commodity that can turn dross into gold: anti-Sovietism.

They realize, of course, that this golden opportunity to go to America isn't given to them for nothing. They have to pay something for it. But what is it that they have to pay?

Their honor.

But up until then they had not known that you could sell

your honor—that there was a market for it—and at such a good price! Now they do. The Americans have taught them that even they have something valuable to sell. And they quietly enter into a shameful bargain with the Americans in which they give other names to what they're doing—"I'm going to America to better myself!"—but know in their hearts that what they are doing is selling anti-Sovietism and the Americans are buying it.

And when they come to America—slipping quietly out of their home country and quietly into their new country, for no bands play at this ceremony—they hold out their hands and say: "Pay!"

"Pay for what?"

They still can't let themselves put it into words—give it a price. After all, how much is selling your country, selling socialism, selling the agony of millions in the war—how much is all that worth? Still—*pay!*

And the Americans are a little shocked. In their propaganda they had taken the position that Jews wanted to come to the U.S.A. "for freedom"—for human rights—for—whatever. But not so bluntly for cash—or if it's not immediately a request for cash it's a request for a "good job," which is cash. After all, they don't come to America to go to work in the mines of West Virginia!

And thus, the first shock on both sides.

There will be other shocks. The worst shock to the immigrant will be to realize the moment he sets foot on American soil how *Soviet* he really is. But then it's too late. For being Soviet is no help to you in a country which is dedicated to eliminating from the face of the earth everything that you had believed in and lived by before.

So they begin their new lives as hostages to Cold War politics. Selling one's country and socialism for dollars had become finally nothing more than a cash exchange—as banal as that. They are moral zeroes. Once they had sold their honor there was nothing else left to sell. And in America, if you have nothing to sell, then you have nothing with which to buy.

GOLD IN AMERICA

"I was wounded in the house of my friends."

Zachariah, *The Bible*

August 8, 1976:

"A 24-year-old graduate of the City University of New York was shot to death at the wheel of his taxi cab early yesterday morning, just two days after taking the job to help support his invalid parents. . .

"Mr. (Bruce) Scher, who graduated from Herbert Lehman College in January, had taken the cab-driver's job because he could find no other work. . .

"The family, along with an older brother . . . emigrated from the Soviet Union to Poland in 1959 and had come to the United States in 1964, the relatives said.

"His father had worked for a time as a tailor, but has not been able to work since suffering a series of heart attacks.

"Detectives said that robbery was the apparent motive for the slaying, but that they had no suspects.

"At the Adams Service Corporation Garage where Mr. Scher had been employed as a driver just two days before his death, co-workers said they had had little chance to get to know him, but that he had talked of his family's flight from the Soviet Union.

" 'He was a good kid,' one of his colleagues said, 'who thought he came to a land of opportunity. Only he found it was a jungle.' " (*New York Times*, August 9, 1976.)

"Ten refugee Jews who fled Russia say the management of their East Side (New York City) hotel is trying to evict them with a campaign of insults, threats and—in two instances—assault.

“‘Forty-eight years I live in Russia with anti-Semitism and nobody touch me with a finger,’ said David Kaufman, an Auschwitz survivor who emigrated here two years ago. . .”

He and nine other Jewish “refugees” had been assigned by a New York Jewish agency to the “Hotel Winslow, a once grand but now half-empty and rundown building” in New York City and had refused to leave when the landlord asked them to move into what they considered to be an even worse hotel. “The landlord then nearly doubled their rents—up from \$117 to \$194.88 a month for Kaufman—on the grounds that he originally accepted them because he wanted ‘to provide emergency housing for recently arrived Russian Jews’ . . .

“Kaufman had taken jobs as a hospital orderly and radiation transporter, and said one refugee works as an electrician and another as a mechanic. He said the others are in Social Security or welfare.

“‘Katz grab me by the coat and shook me,’ said Kaufman—in broken English—of one encounter. ‘He’s a big . . . he can kill five like I. If I was a citizen I would like to give him in the face,’ Kaufman made a furious punching gesture. . .

“‘We don’t have where to go,’ said Kaufman. ‘Now is wintertime. Why has he to throw us out? Why?’

“Katz, a 6-foot-8 with massive shoulders, refused to answer a reporter’s questions. . .

“The night manager . . . said: ‘I think it was very nice that he did accept them.’

“‘Israel doesn’t take these immigrants because they can’t afford to,’ he added. ‘These old people can’t get a job, I feel sorry for them, but we can’t carry them. They are looking for a handout.’

“Another young man at the hotel desk . . . who was referred to as Katz’s son, said, ‘They (the refugees) sit in the lobby. They are bad for business. We had to remove the furniture to get them out.’

“‘These people are animals,’ he said angrily. ‘In capitalism, you don’t get anything for nothing.’” (*New York Post*, November 30, 1977.)

“There is no subject the Russian immigrants speak of with more intensity than the problem of finding employment. Even

if the jobs they held in the Soviet Union exist here, they are not likely to get them. . .

"How well the Russian immigrants in this country actually fare depends greatly on what they came here expecting. Very few of them left the Soviet Union with a clear view of what it would be like to be an immigrant. And almost none came with an accurate picture of New York," noted Joyce Maynard in the *New York Times*, July 29, 1974, after interviewing a number of Soviet Jews.

"The signs are subtle," she added, "but present. Sickness among Russian immigrants is unusually common," said Mrs. (Lenore) Parker, (Director of the Council for Emigrés,"). So are insomnia and depression."

"Roman Romanov was an actor in Moscow. In his Queens apartment recently he stood—a tall, gaunt, silver-haired man—beside a photograph of himself playing Hamlet in Moscow and recited a few lines in Russian. Then he sat almost mute, stroking his dog.

"And it is not just actors who have lost their professional voice. Most Russian doctors must study for a year or more before attempting the accreditation examination that qualify them for internship. (Internship is service, or training in a hospital, at nominal wages, for a number of years—*P.B.*) And often the first time they take the exams they fail. In the meantime, said one Russian neuro-surgeon who had not operated in more than a year, 'My hands are crying!' " (*Ibid.*)

Some professionals do get jobs, but "these . . . are exceptional. . . For them, employment is 'a crisis situation,' according to the American Council for Emigrés in the Professions. 'No group in recent year has faced so many difficulties in adjusting to life in a new country,' it said." (*New York Times*, June 11, 1974.)

Once in New York City, if Russian Jews expected to be welcomed with open arms by the American Jewish community, they are soon disillusioned. "William Kline, a store executive active on behalf of Soviet dissidents, acknowledged: "So far, there has been little response by the Jewish community. Some people feel resentment, and say, "They came out to go to Israel, why have they come here?" (*Ibid.*)

Indeed, why do they "come here"? When asked, some answer

with a joke: "I came not to live but to live better. I came not to have a car but to have one with a bigger engine." (*New York Times*, September 26, 1976.)

Some with sadness: "One man shook his head, as if the question was a rap in the teeth." (*Ibid.*)

Some with silence: "...many keep their reasons secret even from each other... A professor of algebra replied that he had 'forgotten' why he came..." (*Ibid.*)

One left his country for excitement: "A saxophone player answered, 'Life is so boring in Moscow.'" (*Ibid.*)

But whatever reason they gave for abandoning socialism in their country, none said it was because they suffered. "The authoritative Institute for Jewish Policy Planning and Research described the situation in measured terms. 'The typical immigrant is not so much a political refugee as an immigrant of choice coming from essentially non-ideological motives... Most of the new arrivals were not targets of persecution prior to their application for exit visas... They chose to leave what they describe as good jobs, good homes, good economic conditions... (They) were well integrated into Soviet society and bring its behaviour patterns with them.'

"Dr. Herbert Bernstein, director of NYANA (New York Association for New Americans), is well acquainted now with the state of shock that often follows... And having been habituated to disbelieve everything they (the emigrés) were told in Russia, they refused to believe the streets here are *not* paved with gold and that every mattress is *not* stuffed with dollar bills..."

"If you tell an immigrant professor that 50 American colleges have folded since 1970, or that 50 health-care clinics in New York City have shut down, he accepts your words but thinks you are lying. If you point out that for the past three or four years our immigrant quotas have been closed to all professions except doctors, engineers and—oh, yes!—carpenters, he understands without comprehending..."

They not only "understand without comprehending," they became difficult. They make charges. "Over and over again, the immigrants ask how the American Government could 'invite' them here and yet not provide jobs for them..."

“Invite” them? Where did they get that idea?

New arrivals refused to accept the first jobs offered them; in many instances, these jobs were much worse than the ones they had in the U.S.S.R. This became such a problem that, according to Herbert Bernstein “a recent policy change mandates that a family lose its temporary assistance once two job offerings have been rejected.” (*New York Times*, November 29, 1978.)

“Furthermore, the Soviets prickle at our mystifying system of ground rules. Job seniority seems like the insult of discrimination. Why should he do the same work as the man sitting next to him and get less pay? Why be docked for punching in late? How can he be fired for absenteeism?... And why must he pay for medical services?” (*Ibid.*)

And so: “Brilliantly qualified professors drift aimlessly around New York. A chess champion lies in a New York hospital, disabused of his high hopes. A table-tennis star is unemployed in Miami. A former sea captain works as a stevedore in Boston, another is a security guard at a Hilton hotel. A sculptor carves gravestones in Georgia. A few immigrants have gone on welfare, though this prohibits them from applying for permanent residence.” (Faubian Bowers, *New York Times*, September 26, 1976).

Once in America, a startling change comes over a significant number of immigrants politically. More Catholic now than the Pope, they feel they must move even farther to the Right than most Americans themselves are willing to go in order to prove how American they are—how politically *kosher* they are. “Valery (a scientist) was disturbed that many of his fellow immigrants, in Italy, Israel and the United States, had become Rightist in politics.

“‘They hold that anybody who is against the Soviet system is good,’ Valery’s wife said.” (*Ibid.*)

But there is another reason for their dramatized reactionary politics. As non-citizens, and particularly from a Communist country, they remain under ideological suspicion for an indefinite period of time. The FBI and the CIA keep them under scrutiny. And to prove that they have brought with them no taint of Communism they themselves go to as extreme and opposite a political position as possible.

They know, too, that they cannot become citizens (after at least a five year wait) until they can prove that they have renounced their past beliefs, even if they didn't have any, and that, in any case, they are now dedicated opponents to Communism. And they must prove it every day—even beyond the point when they become legally citizens because they can always have their citizenship taken away if it can be proven that it was secured "fraudulently." At the same time, having left their country, sold themselves, they now turn on their country with fury—*why did you make me do this to myself?*

They have to prove that they're not Communists and yet that's extremely difficult in America. For what is a Communist? A Communist is not only someone who belongs to the Communist Party—a matter of record. He is someone who *believes* something! But what?

There is no answer in America for that question that will satisfy the policeman equally with the nosey neighbor next door, a Congressional Investigating Committee equally with the local banker, the KKK with the head of the Jewish Defense League, the man who burns books and the man who reads them. People who have reason to believe that others may suspect them of being secret or even *unconscious* Communists must constantly prove themselves. They cannot afford to be liberals, nor even Democrats, for liberals and Democrats have also been accused of being "Communist." They must therefore put as much distance between their past and their present as they can, and so from the very first moment they set foot in America, they become hostages to the fear that they carry with them invisible signs of their previous lives which others can see but they cannot. Is it "Communist" to want medical health insurance or is it not?

But not only is political fear the fate of the newly-arrived immigrant. He is also prey to thieves and racketeers, including Jewish racketeers, who come to him often under the most respectful of auspices, as witness the following case of the B'nai Torah Institute.

Its public pose was that of a job-finding and -training agency for newly-arrived Jews. Also, one of its social services was to provide "free summer lunches" to the community poor. To do this, "B'nai Torah . . . grew in a few years from a small religious

school in Brooklyn into an organization that obtained millions of dollars in federal funds to provide free summer lunches and other community programs in several states." (*New York Times*, June 23, 1978).

But what actually happened? The officials pocketed most of the money intended to help the 100 Jewish "refugees" who had been enrolled in one of the Institute's schools, and they got nothing.

Commented Murray Kempton in the *New York Post* (August 11, 1977): "Somehow the American promise seems to have fallen a shade short when its best offer to Erica Schwartz is a chance to learn book-keeping from an institution (B'nai Torah—P.B.) whose own books regularly end up in the hands of the prosecuting attorneys. . ."

That crime is the grease on which American social life slides is no new discovery. The Mafia is as American as pizza pies. But to learn how to find one's place in the system and to survive in it with a minimum of risk is an art which is not taught in schools for new Americans. It comes hard, and slowly, and those who are most successful at it can only claim in the end that they managed somehow to stay out of jail.

Disillusioned, preyed upon, driven into job beneath his qualifications, aware that he has made a desperate mistake—a most dishonorable 'mistake'—the Soviet Jew, having burned his bridges behind him, unaware that he had also burned his last link to a sane and honorable humanity, consoles himself that nevertheless he is in America now and he can live a full, Jewish life.

But can he? Not according to the Board of Jewish Education in New York City which addressed a fervent appeal to America's Jews a few years ago:

"As your children grow older, they'll settle down with families of their own. Many will place a mezuzah on their door as a symbol of Judaism . . . but many more won't.

"You see, American Jewry is on the decline. The rate of intermarriage is 31.7 percent. The rates of conversion, assimilation and alienation from Judaism are reaching frightening proportions. And it means, in a matter of time, there won't be any American Jewry to speak of."

In fact, the reigning fear among official American Jewry is that what oppression in other lands could not do to Jewish identity, the American cultural Juggernaut, powered by its enormous economic force, its overwhelming materialism, though exercising no overt, no official governmental pressure, will nevertheless eventually flatten out and disperse the Jewish community despite every attempt to keep it together.

Jews in America keep warning each other that social illnesses, never before typical of Jews anywhere, had made their inauspicious appearance among American Jews and were both a reflection of their changed life in America and a threat of greater changes to come.

Alcoholism had risen precipitately among Jews who had traditionally been non-drinkers. But far more disturbing even than that was the phenomenon, during the 60s, of the Jewish adolescent who became a drug addict. Figures are scarce, but the phenomenon, never before a problem, was now and for a time a growing one.

Nor were they to be allowed to live as Jews and practice their religion in peace. Those Jews from the Soviet Union who were not religious faced an unpleasant problem in America among orthodox Jews who considered them apostates—felt that their divorce from Communism was not quite sincere.

But those Jews who were religious were no less harassed. Aside from the fact that to be truly enrolled into any Jewish community, one had to undergo the unpleasant ordeal of a circumcision—not a small thing in one's maturity—there were other upsetting problems that had to be faced. The day one's child came home from school and asked you what a "kike" is, was one of them. That would be no less traumatic than to try to explain to your child why the Jews killed Christ.

Fundamentalist evangelical movements whose aim was to "convert" the Jew to Christ, or to Christianity, had arisen alarmingly in America, and the movement "Jews for Christ"—just one of them—had become a serious threat to Jewish religious integrity.

President Carter's sister, for instance, headed an evangelical charismatic "church" based on the literal belief in the Bible, including its fundamentalist tenet that the Jews had killed

Christ. It would no doubt surprise newly-arrived Jews to sniff such a medieval stench in the free American air. But before they had learned where and how to settle down in their new beds, which they had made for themselves, they would have to learn much more.

Once in America (or Israel), opening their eyes on what they had been led to believe would be golden streams of sunshine raining on their heads (or at least a good job) Jews found—some of them—a hell. Valery Kuvent went to Israel in 1972, left it for the U.S.A., and was reaccepted back in the U.S.S.R. He writes: “Soon as you find yourself in Israel, you immediately realize that they need you and your family to develop the occupied Arab lands. . .

“When we arrived in Israel, I was invited to speak over the Voice of Israel radio broadcast about the ‘difficult plight’ of Jews in the U.S.S.R. I told them that Jews lived well in the Soviet Union. . . I was promised big money . . . to mobilize the Western public for a fight to facilitate the departure of Jews from the Soviet Union. . . When I refused once again, I began to be persecuted. . . I was told my children would get killed. . .

“They continued to terrorize me in the United States. . .”

So he came back.

Isaac Kaplan went to Israel in 1971, and he, too, managed to return to the U.S.S.R. He writes:

“I was living in Moscow for more than 40 years. We had a comfortable flat with all the amenities. My son studied at a technical school and my daughter also received a good speciality. Every year our family went holidaying to the Caucasus, the Crimea, or in the Moscow Region. Nevertheless, we left for Israel. . .

“We began looking for a job and found ourselves at a Labor Exchange. You can’t get a job in Israel without it. We were given some assignments: I as a workhand and my wife—a charwoman. We went to the address given us and heard: ‘No help wanted.’ We lived through tough times. We had to sell our personal belongings to make ends meet. We recalled with tears in our eyes what a good life we had in the Soviet Union. In Israel we became slaves. . .”

And many, many more of them. But let me close with one that can not be belittled or shrugged away. It concerns a Soviet citizen. She had been a veteran of the war—in fact, one of those Moscow students who left their classes and made a stand against the Nazis at Volokolamskoye highway. Wounded several times, nevertheless she has survived. She is Jewish. She was invited to come as a guest of friends in America and in the few weeks there visited homes and cities, saw good things and bad things, wished she had some of the good things in Moscow, was glad she didn't have the bad things. But one day she was having dinner with one of those friends and at the table sat two Jewish schoolgirls. Suddenly they started crying.

“Why?”

She had just told her hosts that, of course, she was going back to Moscow. Moscow was her home. And suddenly the girls broke out sobbing.

“Because,” they said, “they'll beat you.”

“Beat me? Why?”

“Because you're Jewish, and they tell us in school that they're beating Jews in Moscow.”

“But I live in Moscow and I'm Jewish. Does it look like I've been beaten?”

“You've been here two weeks already,” they said, “and the wounds have healed.”*

* Bella Zuckerman, now working for *Moscow News*.

POWERFUL TEA

“The knight was indeed a valiant gentleman; but not a little given to romance, when he spoke of himself.”

John Evelyn, *Diary*

But back to Mr. Knight. We haven't forgotten him, for he hasn't forgotten us, either. There is much more to his saga than just jimmied quotes.

Mr. Knight made a big mistake when he chose to tangle with *Literary Gazette*. In quoting from it with a twist, Mr. Knight didn't know it at the time but he had taken the first step toward what would end up as a kind of hara-kiri.

We must go back to the piece Mr. Knight had titled: “Racism in Russia: Old Fears, Hates Linger.” In that article Mr. Knight tried to prove that racism—invisible on the surface of Soviet life—lived a frenzied sub-surface existence. For the most part he stuck to the cardinal rule in his piece by which many reporters of the Soviet scene live: never commit yourself publicly to any lie that can be independently checked.

But this time he slipped. He violated that sacred rule not once but several times. And here's where some sleuthing comes in.

The picture which appeared in the September 11, 1978, issue of *U.S. News & World Report* to accompany Mr. Knight's article showed, as has been already said, two Africans facing a white, presumably Russian girl. The Africans, identified as students, are no further identified; nor are the time and place when the picture was taken. That's all. And that's all I had to work on, when I first saw it, and it's worth going back to my original piece for another look. I leave it as I wrote it then as a kind of laboratory example of what you're up against when you know the man's lying but you can't put your hands on the facts to prove it.

But the sleuths at the *Literary Gazette* could. After I'd written

my more or less frustrated piece in which I could only resort to bare deduction, the *Literary Gazette* came up with an article in which the photograph was fully identified. The time when it was taken was given (August 5, 1976), the place—at the 7th International Summer Student Seminar in Noorus, Estonia, the circumstances for the Seminar were described, and who the two African students were.

In their article titled “What Happened to Ibragim When He Met a Russian Girl” (December 27, 1978), they identified the two students as being from Somalia and from Ethiopia. The Somalian student had meanwhile gone home and was not available for comment. But the Ethiopian student was. His name is Ibragim Ahmed Umer, and his comment was: “It’s a damned lie!”

Ibragim, 30, was (he has since returned to Ethiopia) a student at the 5th course of the Engineering Faculty in Lumumba University and was rounding out his last year’s stay.

Belatedly, I come into the act. I got hold of Ibragim, asked him to write me what it was all about, and in due course I received the following letter:

“I am a student from Ethiopia. I’m studying the 5th course of the Engineering Faculty of Lumumba University. Before I came to the U.S.S.R., I finished the Polytechnical Institute (in Ethiopia—*P.B.*) which is the present of the Soviet Union to Ethiopia. I was taught there by Soviet specialists.

“Very soon I will finish Lumumba University, and I may say that during my stay here I didn’t lose any time. I acquired a very important skill of an engineer—a turbine engineer—for my country. When I come back to my Motherland I will be able to apply my knowledge and to work at one of our aviation repair factories.

“Speaking about my studies at Lumumba University, I would make two points, which I think give credit to the Soviet teachers.

“First, they were very experienced teachers, many of them having worked for 18 years teaching, and they know not only their specialities in detail but also how to deal with youth, how to deal with the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. They know the problems of these countries, their interests, and the psychology of young people.

“Secondly, is the fact that we students get practical experience as well as theoretical. After each academic year we are involved in Soviet production where we can apply our theoretical knowledge in practice. I was personally involved with the Ulyanovsk School of Civilian Aviation.

“Then I worked at the Leningrad turbine plant named after Lenin; then at the Moskovsky Aviation Repair Factory in Vnukovo airport. And at Vnukovo I also had my thesis practice. It’s a very important factor in their education that students from abroad are given a chance to get acquainted with Soviet life.

“I visited many cities. I was in Leningrad nine times. But I liked Tashkent (capital of Uzbekistan—*P.B.*) best of all as the symbol of fraternity among nations. What I found there I will tell my people by all means. . .

“Our Lumumba University has an international club which is managed by the students themselves. We spend our leisure time there and organize parties, evenings of meetings with students of other nations, and special evenings for those who are about to graduate from the University.

“So, in the process of study, a new, multi-national family is formed. We get so close to each other that at the end of our stay we find it hard to part. . .

“We like our vacations very much and we spend them in an interesting way. Every year we have free-of-charge excursions to Soviet cities, and we have an opportunity to go to a rest home in the south of the Soviet Union. We Ethiopians understand that the Soviet Union not only helps to prepare specialists for our country but it helps our entire people in their struggle against imperialism, feudalism, reaction—for peace and socialism. . .

“We Ethiopian students, like thousands of foreign students from other countries of the world, work and study and obtain medical care with Soviet students on an equal basis. As far as our living in a hostel is concerned, we also live according to an international principle. Two foreign students in one room. In our classes we study together with the Soviet students and students from different countries. We share everything in common—our interests and our life.

“I was very indignant”—at last, he comes to the point!—“when I saw my picture in an American magazine, *U.S. News & World Report*, of September 11, 1978, under the title, ‘Racism in Russia.’ In that picture you can see a student from Somalia, and a worker of the Komsomol Youth Organization of the Soviet Union. The picture was taken in August, 1976, in Estonia, while we were visiting the international camp where the 7th international students competition took place. The motto of this international competition was: ‘Youth for Peace and Progress.’

“There were representatives from 90 countries of the world there. And if you look more closely over our heads you will read in Russian, ‘Welcome.’ That is the truth. Neither the picture nor the place has anything to do with racism. American correspondents should not mix the word ‘racism’ with our international life; let them write about racism in South Africa or in the U.S.A. itself.

“So, under the cover of correspondent, you can draw the conclusion from that article that it was written by an enemy of our revolution, of our people, by an enemy of friendship among nations, an enemy of world socialism.” (Translated from Ibragim’s Russian.)

Written in Russian, the letter is not only an angry denunciation of Robin Knight as a liar, but also testimony of the thoroughness with which foreign students are tutored in Moscow. For it was written in very competent Russian.

That, one would think, would dispose of Mr. Knight. But no, Mr. Knight has more literary lives than the proverbial cat. There is more to come, and here is where the persevering reader gets his pay-off in secret agents, spies, doped tea or undoped vodka, attempted rape—or the suspicion of attempted rape—and much more. In fact, enough to stuff several paper-backed spy novels—which is probably where the whole thing came from anyhow, written by one of those somebodies who grabbed the money and ran.

It seems that on April 18, 1979, we will meet Mr. Knight again—this time in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The Uzbeks are a very proud people, renowned for their hospitality, and particularly for their good tea. Of course, they also serve vodka. What transpired in a tea-house in Tashkent has,

I'm afraid, grievously hurt the pride of the Uzbeks, who also will not soon forget a certain Mr. Knight.

It seems that Mr. Knight loves vodka—not wisely but too well. Vodka is a very popular drink, Number One in the U.S.A. and other parts of the world. In the U.S.S.R., you can get the genuine stuff. And Mr. Knight got it.

He got so much of it that it got him—and he became, well, what's a better word for it? He became drunk—stink-eyed drunk. Some people go to sleep when they get drunk, and some people—unfortunately—get belligerent. Mr. Knight belongs to the second tribe. Whatever he hated about the country—and he was soon to leave and the steam of years had backed up in him in his boiler—now came roaring out as he abused—witnesses testified—the waiters and began to take the joint apart brick by brick and waiter by waiter.

Mr. Knight, and his fellow knights, delight in telling tales of Soviet “alcoholism” but hardly ever report to their readers that in their zeal to testify first-hand—or first-drunk—to the facts they often fall victim to their own conscientious call to duty. Very well!

If that happens, go to bed and sleep it off. It is strictly forbidden to throw a cup at a waiter!

Knight was taken to his hotel in no condition to be seen by the public. There, refusing the doctor's help, he was persuaded to go to bed. When he did sober up next morning, he realized the pickle he was in. It wouldn't do for it to be known that he had bowed out of his reporter's tour in the U.S.S.R. as nothing but a common drunk!

Here's where the derring-do and cloak-work I promised come in, but it's secondhand stuff, unfortunately. Mr. Knight had read too many paperbacked spy novels but not well. He came up with a version of his stay in Tashkent which must have sent a chill up and down the spine of every housewife in Republicanland back in the U.S.A. when they read it.

Through his hangover, Mr. Knight saw at once that it had all been a plot. The innocent-looking Intourist guides had actually been secret agents, which can immediately be established by the fact that when you ask them if they are secret agents they tell you they're Intourist Guides—a dead giveaway.

And that tea! What could you accuse that tea of? Well, you can accuse it of being doped by that too-innocent-looking guide—who, just as you started on your long slide under the table, you managed to see make a play for your wife.

Still, somehow you had resources to rescue her in the nick of crime before permanent damage was done, and with dope in your tea (no vodka—swear it!), and this play for your wife by an innocent-looking secret agent you had all the makings for at least the first chapter of a new spy novel, if not quite James Bond, still bonded well enough in the hoary tradition of vintage anti-Sovietism to warrant a respectable place on the paperback book racks at all the international airports.

He sent his story to his home magazine which found itself in a kind of tizzy. What to do?

So, heroes that they are, they did it. They lied for him. After all, if a man can claim that someone was trying to make his wife, the least you can do—if you are a friend—is to say that you believe it.

So, too, did the various CIA voices that beam stories through the unresisting airwaves to the world. Robin Knight found dope in his tea, with dire consequences here recounted. “I shall not say why and how I became, at the age of fifteen, the mistress of the Earl of Craven,” begins the famous *Memoirs* of 18-19th century Harriette Wilson.

Nor will Robin Knight ever tell us precisely what happened in that tea-house in Tashkent.

But I believe the police report. Why? Because I have seen Knight at work—I have seen him forge a quotation from Lenin to make Lenin appear to say the opposite of what he actually said—and I have seen what he did with a picture of two Africans and a white Soviet girl—and I have read his articles on Soviet life which I myself have checked on.

There was no dope in that tea.

SULLEN, TIGHT-LIPPED AND ... CIA

*You cannot hope to bribe or twist,
Thank God, the American* journalist
But, seeing what the man will do
Unbribed, there's no occasion to.*

Anonymous

†

We've given so much space to the antics of Mr. Knight because—to tell you the truth—he's so brazen. He violated a sacred principle: don't write any lie that can be checked on. Nobody, of course, who reads *U.S. News & World Report* would ever feel compelled to go to the sources, to check on a quote from Lenin, and as for his fellow reporters in Moscow, there's a kind of honor among—well, reporters in Moscow. They're not there to discredit each other; they're there to discredit socialism.

But even so, do American bourgeois correspondents stationed in Moscow knowingly lie about the Soviet Union? (I shall call them "bourgeois correspondents" though they themselves would rather people looked on them as free souls ranging about the universe in search of truth and truth alone, Diogenes with his little lantern: but they serve bourgeois newspapers and so they are bourgeois correspondents). Or is it more plausibly a case of the seven blind men who grabbed hold of one part of the elephant and so triumphantly reported that the elephant was "mighty like a rope", or whatever? Or is it *Roshomon* all the time?

Or even, is it that their approaches to the key questions of politics and philosophy are so different—if not altogether opposed—to how the Soviet people see these same questions, that sincere differences are inevitable? And who's to say which is truer than which?

Was it true, for instance, that the Western reporters—Craig Whitney of *The New York Times* and Harold Piper of the

* British, in the original.

Baltimore Sun—were no more than two hard-working honest reporters conscientiously striving to turn out a “balanced and fair” report of what they encountered in the Soviet Union? And if they had found anything positive to say about it, they would certainly have hurried to their telexes and beamed it to their respective papers to the mutual rejoicing of editor and reader?

Of course sincere differences are not only possible but inevitable. But there is a great distinction drawn by most people between an honest difference—a sharp criticism—and forgery. If, one has to ask, their case is so good, why do they have to resort to forgery?

As did these two.

What happened?

These two American correspondents were convicted of slander in a Soviet court in July, 1978. They wrote an article, published in their respective newspapers (which returned to the Soviet Union through the *International Herald Tribune*, the air edition of the *New York Times* and the *Voice of America*) in which they charged that the TV confession of one, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a Georgian “dissident,” in which he repudiated his past anti-Soviet activities, was faked.

In other words, Soviet TV showed the world a doctored piece of film—a forgery. Soviet TV has business relations with about 100 foreign TV companies which, of course, do not want doctored news film, and if they were convinced that such film was doctored, would cancel their contracts.

Even so, was their charge true?

No, it was not. The original TV film in which Gamsakhurdia made his public repudiation was re-run in court and Gamsakhurdia, sitting there, was asked if it was the same film in which he had originally appeared.

“Yes,” was his answer.

Or, if you’re a stickler for meticulous authenticity, the answer was “Da.” I heard him. I was there.

That one word was all that was necessary to prove that not the film but the stories of the two correspondents were faked. But Gamsakhurdia went on, however, to charge that the “Western journalists” who had contacted him, and whom he had been foolish enough to talk to—innocence here sometimes plays

a part, or vanity—had published quotations from him that were totally false.

Particularly, the quotation which he allegedly made calling for foreign armed intervention in the U.S.S.R. to “liberate” Georgia, his native country. That was a lie. (One wonders at the honor of reporters who solicit statements from such as Gamsakhurdia, at their most vulnerable—when they’ve had some run-in with whoever, or had been rebuked, or rejected, and the sting had not yet worn off—and then, whether the statements are genuine, if impulsive and ill-considered, or faked, publish them—knowing quite well that such statements calling for armed intervention are treasonable anywhere, anytime. The aim, obviously, is to create a “martyr” by sending the man to jail—whether that was his own idea or not, usually not, no longer matters.)

The two accused journalists did not challenge Gamsakhurdia’s direct testimony in court charging that they were liars. The court found them guilty. On the evidence, there was no other verdict possible. And it fined them 1144 rubles each, and an apology.

The two sent a letter to the court claiming that their story was “fair and balanced” and, in any case, since they were not working for a newspaper published in the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union therefore had no jurisdiction over what they wrote. But they paid the fine.

As to their sources for the story that the TV confession was faked, all they would say was that it came from a “friend of the family”—which Gamsakhurdia said was untrue.

They paid the fine but they did not apologize. There was a kind of stand-off as a result. They could have been declared *persona non grata*, as other reporters caught even more visibly *in flagrante delicto*, have been, and given a one-way ticket back home. But my guess is that the point here was not so much to punish these two correspondents as it was to drive home the fact that the ingrained, routine, dyed-in-the-wool anti-Communism with which they were born, and which is as natural to them as the color of their eyes, has no sanction and no privileges in the land of Socialism. It may be a crime, now and then, to be a Communist in the United States. But in the Soviet Union it’s an honor. And the knee-jerk newspaper slander with which

American Communists are regularly covered at home will not do in the Soviet Union. To be fair about it, this comes as something of a shock to writers who know no other language except slander in which to speak about Communists, and they are genuinely surprised when they meet people, who have power, who object to it. Not call Communists traitors, subversives, foreign agents, and so on? How can one write at all, then?

So, *lying* is probably not quite the word to use in describing what they do. They don't *think* when they say Communists are criminals that they're lying. To them it sounds like the songs their mother taught them.

But there's another element that enters into the picture. Unfortunately, most American correspondents don't come to Moscow as traditional reporters out to get the facts—let the chips fall where they may. They come as conscious and dedicated—at best, opponents—at worst, *enemies*. They cannot and will not see what's positive. And when they lie, they lie on the principle that a lie against mine enemy is enough of a truth for me!

They are convinced that America is in a life-or-death struggle with the Soviet Union and in such a struggle any weapon no matter how foul, is permissible. The noble end sanctifies the ignoble means.

"When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less," Humpty-Dumpty pointed out in his day. And poor Alice, the last of the sane in an already insane world, cried out that "one can't believe impossible things", to which the proper reply which the Red Queen gave her was: "I dare say you haven't had much practice."

You *can* believe impossible things with a bit of practice! If sometimes it seems that journalists from the West have come through a looking-glass when they come to Moscow, there's reason to think so: topsy with them becomes turvy, and before they've gone along very far, they get their readers to believe "six impossible things before breakfast," and, I suppose, at least six more before dinner.

Knee-jerk anti-Soviet reporting, part provocation, part poison-pen letter, becomes second-nature to Western correspondents stationed there, particularly the American.

"Most Western correspondents," admits Malcolm W. Browne

(himself charged with being a newspaper conduit for CIA chores in Saigon) "arrive in European Communist capitals interested, among other things, in talking with dissidents, looking for cracks in the Communist Party apparatus and examining the political, social and economic life of the country as if it were an open society." (*New York Times*, October 20, 1975.)

And, true to the recipe, Emil Sveilis, representing UPI in Leningrad, would write: "Three months after arriving in Leningrad, I parked my car outside the police-guarded Astoria Hotel to meet a dissident source. . ."

From whom presumably news about the wonderful care that children get everywhere in this country would be extracted? From this secret source, without a doubt, would come the hidden information that education is free to all from kindergarten to post-graduate work? From him, "secretly" one would learn that it's possible to walk everywhere or anywhere in Leningrad, Moscow or cities east, west, south or north, and still make it home with your pocket-book intact and your life as well?

But for this information you don't need to skulk around in the shadows meeting dubious characters who, for a pack of American cigarettes, or a bottle of American whiskey, will tell you things that will curl your hair! This caricature of "investigative reporting" is nothing but an extension of the CIA and its nasty ways, and therefore when Soviet authorities look askance on it, one should not be too surprised. Nor should one be surprised that such "reporters" find life in, for instance, Leningrad unrewarding, despite one of the finest ballet companies in the world, outstanding opera, and the presence of the Hermitage, that jewel of an art museum, through which you could wander for nine years and never totally exhaust its riches. "Those years in the Soviet Union's second largest city," moans Mr. Sveilis, "had taught us to be sullen, tight-lipped and unemotional. . ." (UPI, July 24, 1978).

If *this* is the way bona fide reporters act when they're in the Soviet Union, how, one wonders, do bona fide CIA agents act?

There is no way to tell the difference!

That there are CIA agents among the reporters in Moscow (and in other capitals of socialist countries) nobody seriously disputes. Estimates of how many CIA newspapermen there are

in all capacities, in all countries, including the U.S.A., range from 400 (according to Carl Bernstein, ex-*Washington Post* reporter, famous for his part in the Watergate expose, naming the figure in a *Rolling Stone* magazine article) to a mere "three dozen" admitted by the CIA itself.

How can one tell who is or who is not working for the CIA? "Seeing what the man will do, unbribed", it's hard to say.

Whatever the true figure, the fact remains that *some* foreign correspondents in Moscow are planted CIA agents but since they all write, more or less the same, it's hard to tell which is which.

But the main point to make is that such reporters under such auspices reflecting such ideas are fighting not merely the U.S.S.R., nor even the U.S.S.R., in the first place. Their main enemy is the American people. Since they write for the American people, first of all, it is the American people whom they deceive. And they deceive the American people in a political way. Their stories have practical results. Senator (Democrat) Jackson and Congressman (Republican) Vanick would not have dared put forward their restrictive trade proposals coupling trade with the Soviet Union with Jewish emigration if American public opinion had not been prepared beforehand by invented stories from Moscow reporters about "Soviet Jewish repression"!

It's not their concern about opening a "closed society" that inspires American correspondents to peculiar activities (actually organizing people to oppose the government where they are guests—an act which the American government would reward, if the same thing was done by a TASS correspondent in America, with a good swift kick out!) and sparks their abnormal "curiosity" for what the little green men from the anti-Soviet saucers have to say.

For even if the Soviet Union were as "open" as the proverbial book, this would not improve their consciences or their reportorial style. Chile, under Allende, was as "open" as you could ask for. Though the government's chief newspaper opponent *El Mercurio* was all-but-openly financed by the CIA, still the Allende government took no action against it. Its reward for such magnanimity was a torrent of slander from that newspaper that led to a torrent of bullets.

For whether a country is "open" or "closed" is the least of our reporters' concerns. What they are interested in is finding material which will make a biased and prejudiced picture, decided upon in advance, more plausible.

For the aim of these men (and women) who live unreal lives, "sullen, tight-lipped," in a country they consider "the enemy," removed psychologically from Soviet reality though ostensibly living physically in it, indifferent to its virtues, venomous about its achievements, is to condition your mind—"gentle reader"—against the Soviets so that when you are ultimately called upon to send your son—if you still have one left after Korea and Vietnam—or yourself to die, you will do so willingly, believing that you are sacrificing yourself in a noble cause.

They want you to die because of all the crimes against humanity that they can possibly think of, the worst is to pass a law in which rents are kept at 3 to 4 percent of the family income!

POLITICS OF HUNGER

*The corn that makes the holy bread
By which the soul of man is fed,
The holy bread, the food unpriced,
Thy everlasting mercy, Christ.*

John Masefield, *The Everlasting Mercy*

The New York Times has been pathologically anti-Soviet from the very beginning of the existence of the Soviet Union. Its venom toward and grotesque distortions of Soviet revolution became finally such a scandal in the profession that it inspired Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz to conduct a survey of *Times*' reporting. The result, published in *The New Republic* in August, 1920, is a classic in the history of journalism. Concluded the two: "From a viewpoint of professional journalism, the reporting of the Russian Revolution is nothing short of a disaster."

Have things improved since?

There were two main *The New York Times* reporters in Moscow while I was there: Craig Whitney and David Shipler. As we already know, Craig Whitney was caught red-handed trying to put over a clumsy anti-Soviet forgery. David Shipler, on the other hand, has been more careful.

Both deserve a section to themselves. Let's start with Craig Whitney.

The most extraordinary thing that first strikes the eye of anyone reading Mr. Whitney's writings is not their style, which is not particularly noteworthy, but their clairvoyance. Mr. Whitney has remarkable eyesight.

On April 14, 1978, for instance, Mr. Whitney, sitting in Moscow, nevertheless—with his keen eyesight—managed to see exactly what was going on in—Africa!

Whitney, cited "Western diplomats" and "U.S. intelligence," those sturdy founts of wisdom and truth, as proof that the So-

viet Union was planning to "step . . . up support for the Black Rhodesian guerrillas." And: "But the most urgent fear of Western observers ("Western diplomats" and "U.S. intelligence"—*P.B.*) of Soviet-African relations here is that the Russians and the Cubans might move toward major military involvement in Rhodesia unless the United States and Britain can head off full-scale fighting there."

This potpourri of "might" 's and "Western analysts believe" 's, and "fear" 's, and "observes" 's and "not clear" 's is headlined: "Russians May Be Stirring Cuban Kettle in Africa".

That was April, 1978. April, 1980, knocked that assortment on "might" 's and "maybe" 's on the head, and its name was Zimbabwe. But why was the balloon launched at all? Was it the first sally in a plot that later went awry—a plot to go into "Rhodesia" with American arms on the charge that the "Cubans" were about to?

A sinister pattern had already developed. First the charges in the press—"Russians plan to use chemicals," or "Russians plan to send in Cubans," or, "Russians mass troops on Iranian border"—and then the American imperialist "counter-action" to a charge they themselves invented!

Mr. Whitney's willingness to be used as a conduit for such unbacked charges—so patently provocative, so obviously part of a plot—needs to be explained.

Mr. Whitney has more than just phenomenal eyesight. He is (or was), by turns, an expert in agriculture, a friend of abused Soviet writers, a new-old China Hand, a moralist of some considerable asperity, a closet Communist, and so on. His range is wide; his expertise staggering.

In October, 1978, Whitney manages to turn a Soviet writer "not a dissident" (oh, rare species!) into one anyhow by the magic of his prose—by posing an unsolicited sympathy for him and paraphrasing his thoughts and ideas in such a way that he comes out, not just a critic of some aspects of Soviet life, but as an enemy of his country: Yuri Trifonov.

And though he himself cites stories written by Trifonov, which are critical of certain Soviet realities, aiming to correct or eradicate them, in Whitney's version they come out as though they had been written in a counter-revolutionary spirit, in *opposition*

to socialism itself. With such "friends," as they say, who needs enemies?

In the primitive catechism by which Whitney categorizes the world, his answer to the question: what inspires a critical writer under socialism? is love of . . . capitalism! For the ambition of returning to a system in which buying cheap and selling dear is the supreme art and transcendent virtue of the successful man, whether he's a pushcart operator or an artist, is taken to be a fundamental spur of all critical writers, socialist or bourgeois.

The approval of capitalist journalists is the kiss of death to any socialist writer, who, seeing himself praised in bourgeois print, must ask himself: how have I gone wrong?

For to *The New York Times* (and to other bourgeois organs) the test of the independence and freedom of a writer is decided by how anti-Communist he is, or can be made to seem. There is, not surprisingly, a great deal of slyness in this tactic. The assumption here is that of all voting citizens the world over the artist is the most vulnerable to flattery and least able to think for himself, at least in political and class terms. Praise his poem and the poet will weep oceans of gratitude and follow you wherever you lead kissing your hand all the way! Mr. Whitney's limping prose qualifies him as such a literary critic.

But not only as a literary critic. As an expert on Soviet agriculture as well. It's amazing how casually bourgeois journalists take up a subject which others have spent their lifetime studying, having written and read tomes on it and still feeling themselves unqualified to give a categorical yes or no to its problems. But not your typical reporter whose only prior knowledge of agriculture came from camp trips in the country during summer vacations!

Ever since Russia was, the diet of the peasant has been largely starches. The shift to proteins, which are the basis for physical and mental development, became possible only in Soviet times. This was a *mass* shift. Of course, the upper gentry always had meat to eat, in good or bad times.

Old Russia was not a cattle-raising country. Raising large herds of cattle, which is possible only if a fodder stock can also be raised, is comparatively recent in the Soviet Union. To raise enough meat before a fodder base can be fully guaranteed

can be done only by importing grain. And this is what the Soviets did—imported it. Bought it. Just as Americans buy coffee, bananas, and sugar elsewhere. Trade. It's existed since time itself.

Buying means paying for what you buy in dollars, which was a very welcome arrangement for American farmers (though at the same time these Soviet grain purchases were also fobbed off in the public prints as being responsible for inflation in the U.S.A.).

But does buying American grain mean that the Soviet Union, with the same agricultural facilities as the U.S.A., cannot produce as well? Does that buying grain mean that the Soviets are tacitly admitting that capitalist agriculture is superior to socialist?

Not at all. Most of the Soviet Union lies outside—far north—of the optimum grain-growing areas, and to get grain to grow there is a harder struggle than it is in the U.S.A., where the rolling prairies had been waiting for centuries, virginal, fertilized by millions of buffalo (all now dead), enjoying a temperate climate, until the first plow to break the plains. (Even so, you would have a dust bowl in the 30s).

The weather is more cruel and capricious in the U.S.S.R. and droughts are more common. Nevertheless, the average crop increase, year by year—with bad years included—is impressive and the perspective for the future is a good one. In 1913, the last of the peaceful Czarist years, the gross grain harvest was 86 million tons. First World War and Civil War and World War II arrived and production fell. In 1931, it had fallen to 60.5 million tons, where it stayed for years. By 1940, however, it had risen to 95.6 million tons. Second World War intervened—enormous grain-growing areas, especially in the Ukraine, were devastated by the Nazis. In 1945 grain production had fallen to 47.3 million tons. Nevertheless, with war over, and a terrible shortage of manpower evident, industry in ruins, agriculture again reduced to a bare subsistence, still by heroic efforts it was possible to raise grain production by 1952 to 92.2 million tons. By 1971-75 the nation was bringing in an average 181.6 million tons annually, and for the 1976-80 period production rose to 205 million tons annually.

Meanwhile, the rise in grain production made it feasible to

shift over to a largely protein diet, assured mainly by its own native production of grain, from which the fodder base had been created, and supplemented by grain purchases abroad. Imported grain was now fed to cattle, hogs and poultry and the consumption of bread and bakery products simultaneously fell. The average production of grain for the 1976-80 five-year plan including crop failure years *exceeds* the average of the preceding five-year period by 20-25 percent!

Writes Whitney: "The history of Soviet agriculture is strewn with man-made disasters as well as natural calamities..." but never, it becomes apparent, with any successes, man-made or otherwise.

Yet, in 1965, Soviet *per capita* consumption of meat was 41 kilos. In 1978 it was 57 kilos. In that period the price of meat in the West had jumped three times (and still going). But in the U.S.S.R. 2 rubles 40 kopeks per kilo in 1965 remained 2 rubles 40 kopeks per kilo in 1979, though wages had meanwhile gone up. Therefore, prices of meat had gone *down*. Averages in the U.S.S.R., by the way, are closer to the mathematical means, for there are no glaring extremes of wealth and poverty, with enormous consumption of all the best at one end of the social spectrum, and undernourishment at the other end, to reconcile statistically.

The longtime aim of Soviet agriculture, always harassed by bad weather, is to become fully independent of the weather. That goal is set to be reached in the next 10 to 15 years. Planners figure that by a system of more widespread irrigation, more intense farming methods, a greater use of fertilizers, better strains of cold- and drought-resistant seeds introduced more widely, etc., opening up still larger areas of virgin territory and reclaiming swamps and wastelands, this can be done.

Crop failures have taken place, but also bumper crops have been harvested. To the Whitneys, however, crop failures are never due to natural causes (as the 1975 crop failure—140 million tons harvested—was due to the worst drought in 100 years) but always to the failure of the socialist farm system. 1975 was proof to him of that, and *The New York Times* said so in very visible headlines.

But in 1978 there was a bumper crop—over 235 million tons.

Logically, if 1975 was proof that the system had failed, 1978 should have been proof that it had succeeded. His story (November 5, 1978), it's true, announcing the bumper crop was, in his own words, in another connection, "remarkably subdued".

Still, what is one to say of people who ghoulishly speculate on food shortages—who look longingly ahead to people starving?

Meanwhile, the cold winds of the latest installment of the Cold War sent a blast of their own to complicate matters. When President Carter—to win an election, to try to stop the ongoing liberation of the world's oppressed—unilaterally cancelled grain contracts in December 1979, which had been in effect for years between American farmers and the Soviets, this action was accompanied by open, Yahoo, cries in the American press that *now*, the Soviets will have to "behave" or we (the Americans) will starve them—or at least cut their food intake so dramatically that there will be political repercussions from the Soviet people! People who toy with the minds of the American masses every day and turn them this way or that way almost at will have the enduring illusion that if only they could hit the right formula—something like "Reach for a Lucky Instead of a Sweet" (which turned millions of women onto cigarettes in the 20s and lung cancer in the 50s) or "Movies Are Better Than Ever"—they could also turn the Soviet people into mindless zombies.

Mr. Whitney's chortles can almost be heard in his prose. Scratch an American political writer and you come up with a Houhyhnm! Hardly bothering to conceal his glee, he would record in one of his stories that the cut-off in grain deliveries would not result in starvation, as some Soviet poets were claiming was the American hope, but only "lead to a 20 percent decline in Soviet meat production later this year, the greatest decline since the war." (February 7, 1980, *The New York Times*.)

Speculation in hunger is, in the scale of barbarism, on the same level as genocide. Pol Pot is their hero.

But, even so, the sword cuts two ways. Depriving the Soviet hogs and cattle of fodder feed costs American farmers and the American economy, according to Senator George McGovern, about five billion dollars! According to the report of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the cut-off meant a loss of about

25 percent to the farmers of America. And—always par for the course—the Federal “compensation” for the loss, such as it was, fell not into the hands of the production farmer but into the hands of the entrepreneurs, the banks, the army of takers that stand in between the man with the hoe and the man at the supermarket.

Whitney, like other reporters, had done his bit in painting an image of Soviet agriculture—“strewn with man-made disasters”—that implied that here was where the Soviets were politically vulnerable, and with those reports, along with the CIA’s similar reports, one interlocking neatly with the other, it was no surprise that the combination should finally come up with a political payoff. This was ideally his service to the American people who, you might say, may just have to pay for his ink with their blood. The man who had been convicted of forgery had forgotten nothing—forgiven nothing—learned nothing!

Not satisfied with being an expert on agriculture, literature and pots stirring in far-off Africa, Mr. Whitney does not hesitate to become a “news analyst” as well. Predictably he will “analyze” the very “news” he has himself manufactured and find in it, not too surprisingly, precisely what he had put there.

For instance, he now comes forward as an instant expert on Soviet relations with China.

In his August 18, 1978, story he says, with the tone of imminent revelation, very much like that of the medium’s at a seance about to rap on the table for the third time: “With China’s leadership pursuing a global anti-Soviet policy offensive in Moscow’s back-yard (how it’s possible to squeeze a “global” offensive in a “back-yard” is one of those unsolved mysteries however—*P.B.*) there are increasing signs that the Kremlin is genuinely afraid that the result could be a shift in the strategic and political balance against it.”

After offering this ball of cotton candy to his reader (there’s no substance in it at all), Mr. Whitney then threshes through all the possible variations of anti-Sovietism the Chinese position is capable of producing, ending on the prediction—though attributing it to “some Soviet analysts”—that the end of detente is now in sight. But no “Soviet analyst” has predicted (especially

in 1978) the "end of detente," with or without the "Chinese card," even today (1980) after the events in Afghanistan.

This isn't "analysis," this is wishful thinking. Analysis is made of sterner stuff. It recognizes the difficulties and complications inherent in the situation and is tempered with a sober, objective consciousness that world events are not a card game—that the fate of mankind is at stake. World events are not to be seen simply as a "power struggle," as a jousting for position of rival power groups; there is no such thing as a "Kremlin" that is "afraid." All this is sheer nonsense—a pacifier of words to suck on with absolutely no nutrient in it. This chatter passes for thinking and, since it dovetails with the same kind of chatter that comes from dozens of other correspondents and "analysts" who, by turns, make the "Kremlin" "fear," "exult," "doubt," "scheme," and so on, it goes to shape even more ineluctably the American readers' mind into that grotesque caricature—part-prejudice, part-fear, part-ignorance—that is scaring half the world to death.

But this is what passes for "analysis," not only in *The International Herald-Tribune* but literally in *all* the bourgeois journals which speculate about Soviet policy. And speculation is all they do for none of them have private pipelines to Soviet authorities who feed them inside material. But is it necessary to have "inside" sources to explain Soviet policy? Not at all. There is no contradiction between the public statements of policy and the private aims of those who "really run" the country. When Brezhnev as leader of his country and Party says that the Soviet Union wants peace, Brezhnev as a private citizen at home with his wife and grandchild does not have a different story to tell.

What else is Mr. Whitney an "expert" on? He has a problem. He wants to slander Soviet reality, but it's awkward to have to admit that much of his negative material comes from the Soviet press itself. The myth has been firmly established that the Soviet press is "government-controlled" and therefore a mere puppet in the hands of authority. This myth is too valuable to endanger. The leg it stands on is that no criticism of government big shots ever appears in the Soviet press. But since the opposite is true, what can one do about it?

What Whitney will do is sacrifice a pawn but only to protect

the Queen. He will admit that "investigative journalism" does exist in the Soviet Union. He will admit it because he wants to hitch a free ride on its stories that expose certain negative features in Soviet life. And he doesn't hesitate to do that. But he protects the Queen at the same time by charging that the press never attacks the Communist Party—and *that*, by his definition, is what makes all the difference!

Even so, and this deserves a word or two, Mr. Whitney will point to this unfortunate fact more in sorrow than anger. How un-Communist the Communists are! One gets the impression from him that if Communists only lived up to their ideals, Mr. Whitney himself would leave the closet.

"MAKING IT"—*New York Time's* STYLE

"Merely corroborative detail, intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative."

William Gilbert, *Mikado II*

David Shipler (when he was working in Moscow) was described as "Moscow Bureau Chief for *The New York Times*," and with Craig Whitney, as we have already seen, a convicted slanderer, he covered the Soviet scene as though he was not in Moscow at all. For despite the Moscow deadline, neither he nor Mr. Whitney is (was) really there. Their bodies were. Their hearts were not.

Thus, living in Moscow they do not see Moscow. They see something they call "Moscow" which, however, was first conceived and fashioned in New York or—more likely—in that peculiar building in Langley, outside of Washington, D.C., where the master painters paint a world neither you nor I see but which, seen by Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, so terrified him he jumped to his death from his hospital window, crying, "The Reds are coming!"

They see, therefore, not the living, real, actual Soviet Union but the grotesque Frankenstein monster which is the concoction not of reality but of fear—of envy or despair.

Granted that it's not easy for them to work in Moscow. In earlier days, their predecessors had it much easier. Sitting in Riga, Latvia, then still capitalist, those anti-Soviet pioneers would simply dream up stories about the young revolutionary state—simply invent them out of whole cloth—and send them to American newspapers, *The New York Times* first of all, claiming that these hair-raising Baron Münchhausen tales of theirs were holy fact and not the fright-wig fiction that they palpably were.

That was in the 1920s. You can't quite do it that way anymore. Nevertheless, little has essentially changed since. For

inside every *Times*' reporter there is still a science-fiction writer trying to get out—and often, more often than not, succeeding, as we shall soon show.

Exhibit One: “Making it—Russian Style” (*The New York Times*, Feb. 11, 1979).

The fraud begins with the title itself: “Making it—Russian Style.”

“Making it,” like “yellow peril,” is a purely American phenomenon.

Norman Podhoretz, editor of the ultra-reactionary Jewish magazine of opinion, *Commentary*, and ghost to the now-Senator Daniel Moynihan (who, when he was U.S. ambassador to the U.N. read the speech Podhoretz is reputed to have written for him in reply to the U.N.'s branding of Zionism as racist) explained even more fully what the phrase meant in his autobiography, aptly-titled, *Making It* (Random House, New York, 1971).

“Making it” means making it in the specifically American climate of cut-throat, unprincipled competition, where good guys not only always end up last but deserve to, where the prize is money and power, and though the price is the loss of character and humanity, few hesitate to pay it. But money and power are the highest good possible for an American to achieve, and to achieve it no holds are barred, all foul means are fair. If you “win” no questions asked. There is only one *caveat*: don't get caught.

That (and much more) is making it—American style. The style is patented in America, it bears its brand, its trademark, it is unmistakably American and is good only for America. It cannot be transported across the borders without losing its home-grown fizz. Absolutely nowhere else in the world—even in the rest of the capitalist world—do conditions exist that even remotely duplicate the depths of American intellectual corruption, especially of those who “made it.”

And this is precisely why Shipler chose to slip it—unseen, as Robin Knight tried to slip in the “Yellow Peril”—into the Soviet world. He was hoping that no one would detect the fraud, thus managing to kill two birds with one stone: slandering the Soviet Union by arbitrarily grafting a strictly American vice on it,

and—the second bird—by claiming that if the Soviets are also guilty of it, then the Americans can't be so terribly bad after all! Not a bad instance of *chutzpa*!

So: if you accept the notion that the only kind of “making it” that you know—that is, “American”—is also typical of Soviet life, then the whole ballgame's lost before the first ball's been thrown out!

Nevertheless, not so much as an attempt to refute the facts which are discretely invisible—but simply to see *how* he does it (“now you see it; now you don't”), it's worth going to the trouble of taking a closer look at it.

Everything in Shipler's piece (“Making It—Russian Style”) depends on the fact that nothing he says should be susceptible to objective proof—like devils and witches. His aim is not to convince by marshalling irrefutable and visible facts to look at in the bright daylight. His aim is to subvert your imagination. He will construct an image for which he will use fictional techniques—and fictional techniques are necessary for fiction demands the willing suspension of disbelief—otherwise you will not accept a gorilla on top of the Empire State Building knocking down airplanes with his paw!*

Shipler begins his piece by posing (as candidates for ‘making-it’) what he calls typical 16-year-old representative types from both the Soviet Union and the United States in terms of the myths he says both their societies hand them.

Shipler's “typical” American 16-year old is described as starting out life seeing “his future as if it were a broad sweep of unlimited opportunity to be shaped solely by his individual talents and hard work, a pristine field on which he will leave his own distinctive footprints.”

He lovingly labels that image of the future a “myth”. Nevertheless, for all his apparent candor in labelling it a “myth”, if you look more closely, you will see that it is really a benign myth: for myth though it may be, still it reflects not too badly on the society creating it.

Shipler claims that this is typical of “16-year-old Americans.” He doesn't say *some*. He says this is *typical* of *all* 16-year-old

* The reference is to the popular American movie *King-Kong*.

Americans. But what about *these* "16-year-old Americans"—add a year or so—or are they not Americans? "Their eyes are bleak, some, strutting down the street, speak with false bravado. Others stand listlessly on street corners speaking in monotones of what they think being an adult is like. Most can barely read or write. They lack good work habits, that should have been built into their educational experience. They are 17 to 22 years old. The majority of them are minority youngsters." ("They are a lost generation." Horace W. Morris, Executive Director of the New York Urban League, *New York Times*, February 7, 1977).

And what about *this* American? Allen White, 14 years old, had gone home that day (in 1970) muttering that "they" were going to "get me" for having doped the soda drinks of three other boys at JHS 52 in the Inwood Section of upper Manhattan (where my daughter then went to school and this report is firsthand). All the boys who drank the doped soda suddenly took ill and were rushed to the Beth-Israel hospital.

"Somebody put the finger on Allen," one of his friends (according to the *New York Post*) said. "Rumors were flying all over the place that Allen was pushing the stuff, and Allen told me that several kids had threatened to kill him if one of the guys in the hospital died," a student was quoted as saying.

Allen, on his way home "flying high on barbiturates," told friends: "The dean is after me, the police are questioning me, the principal is on my back and some of the kids want to get me," and he kept mumbling, "it ain't murder, it's suicide."

Home, he lay down on the couch, then started swallowing fistfuls of barbiturates (always conveniently at hand for any child with the taste for them). His friends, there with him, fought to stop him but somehow he managed to push 52 pills down his throat. When the police arrived he was dead.

That was 1970. One year earlier, 224 children in New York City alone—55 of whom were 16 or under—had died of heroin overdose. According to Sanford Garelik, top cop of the city then, 1,000 infants had already been born that year of drug-addicted mothers and were themselves drug-addicted in the womb—needing to be detoxified the first days of their lives on earth, some dying from the trauma. The New York Narcotics Addiction Control Commission reported that in 1969, 30 to 40 per-

cent of children between the ages of 13 to 16 were using some form of drug, and that 19 percent of those were hooked on heroin.

For Allen White—and for hundreds and thousands of teen or pre-teen agers in New York City (and in every big and middle-sized city in the country)—the future, even as a myth, did not stretch ahead in “a broad sweep of unlimited opportunity”.

His future, and their future, was pitifully brief. For the society, in the grip of powerful criminals, conspired with those criminals to bring drugs right to his 14-year-old hand and put an end to any kind of dreaming of making it forever. None of that generation—in fact the generation of the 60s—believed for a moment in Shipler’s myth, so benign under the apparent mockery.

For the truth is that Shipler could offer such a “myth” to his readers as being universally believed by American youth only because he was writing for readers overwhelmingly white, middle-class, and steeped in racist concepts.

The only American youth who might plausibly have entertained Shipler’s myth in its original form are the white, middle-class youth, but not even of our time—possibly around 1900—as the youth of the 60s so dramatically proved. “We,” they used to cry, “are the children our parents warned us against!” So Shipler’s “myth” is a myth itself.

But what is the “myth” the Soviet 16-year old starts out in life believing (according to Shipler whose credentials as an authority on Soviet youth are still in the mail)?

It’s a “future of multiple choices, each a well-marked path of material security and comfort, each a noble contribution to the building of a new society.” Obviously—on first reading—as naive a myth as the American.

But is this really a myth (even if we accept it as accurate, which we are far from doing)?

The New York Times reader is supposed to nod in amused recognition of the cue-words: “Well-marked path,” for isn’t that simply saying—as Shipler will hurry to say soon enough—that Soviet youth are started off in life on a narrow, predetermined “track,” like ants, their future marked off for them by their society, rigidly and implacably, aimed at a fate empty of any

real content other than the banal “security and comfort” as the final climax—an armchair and TV?

Yes, of course. And, as for “noble contribution to the building of a new society,” every reader of the *Times* will smile patronizingly at such primitiveness. And if they don’t smile, then the hard work of generations of *Times*’ Moscow reporters will have gone down the drain.

Well, that’s the pudding. Now let’s try eating it.

Is it true that Soviet youth are overwhelmingly panting for “symbols of status” or for “stylish clothes,” “automobiles,” “excellent schools,” entrance into which is possible only through bribery and nepotism, and “pleasant vacations,” again secured only by the personal influence route, and even “meat and vegetables”—and does all this add up to a “certain restlessness” whose counter-revolutionary potential Shipler (and the CIA) dream of and suck on their thumbs as they do?

And, since money is “useless” in the Soviet Union, as Shipler (and others) will maintain, to get all this—and only this, for what else is worth getting?—a Soviet careerist, and there are no others, must learn how to “position himself strategically” in the society at precisely the point where he has best access to influence and pull, to special sources of power and corruption, and, lo, he’s “made it”—“Russian”-style!

Easy when you know how.

But is the Soviet Union one vast congeries of advantage-seekers, wire-pullers, influence-buyers and -peddlers, of hypocrites and cynics, of self-seekers and careerists, of opportunists and yearners after the American fleshpots (has Shipler missed any?) with now and then a lonely, eccentrically honest soul wandering fecklessly through it all?

Did the Revolution led by Lenin produce nothing but a “new Soviet man” who looks exactly like an old American hustler—except that the American hustler has something to hustle for and for the Soviet hustler the pickings are very slim?

Isn’t this really tipping one’s hand a little too obviously in one’s eagerness to bolster a shaky case, which no matter how often one “proves” it, never seems *proved*?

To change the metaphor a bit—here’s a deck of marked cards if ever there was one!

Even so, with great suspicions about the partner we're playing with—that tie-pin with a diamond as big as an egg can blind you!—let's pick up the cards, marked though they are, and see what we can do with them.

Of course, there's nothing inherently wrong or immoral or evil, or anti-Communist, in wanting good clothes, a nice apartment, a car, fine food, and so on. Nor is there anything evil in wanting to rise in your profession, nor is such an ambition proof that you are automatically an opportunist.

Mr. Shipler tries to twist all these normal facts of life and by a sinister mathematics make them add up, as they do in the capitalist world, to the same immoral sum in the socialist world.

But it can't honestly be done. And this is so not because, man for man, more Soviet people are subjectively honest than are people living in capitalist America. The *system* doesn't allow it. The scope for evil, crime and opportunism in the Soviet Union is severely circumscribed by the nature of the system itself.

One can scheme, for instance, from now till doomsday but he'll never scheme his way in the U.S.S.R. to owning a string of houses to rent out for profit. It can't be done. One may be a liar and a thief, but lying and thieving all you want, you still can't lie or steal your way into owning a factory or a mill. And the same goes for a whole list of other things—from running a prostitution ring to buying and selling presidencies.

The effective practical range for greed, opportunism, bribery—the scope for evil—is limited by the nature of socialism itself. What's left is small potatoes by capitalist standards of crime and much of what passes for crime in the Soviet Union couldn't even make the police blotter in the U.S.A.!

The "crimes" that do occur in socialism are perfectly explicable and their prevention possible. As long as there is a shortage of certain goods, a certain number of people will be willing to pay extra for them and no questions asked and the types to meet that need will arise. Once those goods appear in sufficient numbers on the open market, however, the need for them disappears and so do the criminal types servicing that need.

Obviously the cure for that kind of crime is within the power of society. Other crimes—characterized to me by a sociologist

as "impulse crimes"—have to do with failures in the human personality, with drink, with whatever. But they are *personal*. And though society also conditions how, when, and why they appear, they are not, except in a marginal sense, social problems.

Many of the things frowned on in the Soviet Union wouldn't even raise an eyebrow in the U.S.A. "What is the worst your bad boys do in school?" I asked teachers (not one but many). "Smoke in the toilet," said they.

Still, this is trying to prove the negative—that Shipler's idea of crime does *not* exist in the Soviet Union. Let's go on to the positive—to what *does* exist, to what really expresses the moral nature of Soviet youth.

Mr. Shipler went to BAM (Baikal-Amur-Mainline). It's a railroad. It's a very long railroad, running a couple thousand miles (about 3,200 kilometers when it's finished) along the Trans-Siberian railroad which is 180 to 500 kilometers to the north of it. It goes through some of the roughest territory known to man. The earth never thaws there. The rivers are violent when they unfreeze, as they momentarily do in the short summers. The mountains are big and made of solid granite. The winters are eternal. And flies there carry stingers like sabers.

When he visited there Shipler saw thousands—tens of thousands—young Soviet boys and girls who came to those (in his eyes) godforsaken Siberian wastelands from comfortable homes in the Western part of the Soviet Union to live in tents and primitive huts, where the temperature often fell to minus 45 below Centigrade in the winter. The work was hard. Unpleasant. The thousands of youth who came could go back if they wanted. And yet the overwhelming majority stayed. Why? Who were they? What were they like?

Shipler doesn't really know but he bluffs us that he does. As it happens a study was made of exactly that question by a Soviet demographer, Victor Perevedentsev, and published in *Sovietskaya Kultura*, January 30, February 3 and 6, 1979. Here are his findings:

"From one-half to three-fourths of the total workforce in the settlements of BAM's Western Sector are young people up to the age of 29 inclusive. The overwhelming majority

are men: from 75 to 98 percent. The educational level is high: the share of builders with a secondary education amounts to 78 percent, while those with a specialized secondary and higher education—from 19 to 38 percent. Thus, the BAM population is young, highly educated, relatively unskilled, of urban background and with sharp disproportions in its makeup.”

Why did they come? Writes Perevedentsev:

“There are several basic reasons:

- the importance of this work for the country,
- a desire to learn more about life, to test one’s wings,
- an interest in new places and people, and the construction site,
- improving one’s material situation,
- various family circumstances, etc. . .

“Of course, many are attracted by the benefits and material incentives. However, after talking to the builders you get convinced that wages are often far from the main thing with single young people. . .”

And why do they leave?

“Approximately half of the workers whose three-year contracts expired left. . . The usual reasons people give for leaving BAM are these: dissatisfaction with living conditions, the scarcity of supplies and the lack of domestic services and cultural facilities.”

Under the conditions that exist—rugged and demanding—it’s amazing that, after three years of it, *anybody* stays. But half stay. Why?

Again, in *Sovietskaya Rossia*, for November 1979, we find another study by L. Kogan, a Doctor of Philosophy, made of the working force at Sredneuralsky copper smelting works in Revda and the medical preparations plant in Sverdlovsk—both plants so far off the beaten track that results obtained there are very typical of the actual, the overwhelming majority of the workers, who do not live in Moscow or Leningrad.

The study was intensive and its aim was to try to gauge the real attitude of Soviet workers to their work—to their place in society as workers. “What characterizes labor in the socialist way of life?” was the guiding question.

Here are the results. How many worked because they felt they had to, out of duty alone? “Only 2.6 percent of the staff of the drug plant and 3.4 percent of the personnel at the copper plant work unwillingly, according to duty. Whereas the overwhelming majority—89.2 and 90.9 percent respectively—said they like their work and understand its social value.”

Why do they work? “The chief motives for work are as follows: the habit to work conscientiously (59.4 and 60.3 percent); a desire to do something useful for society (44.5 and 45.5 percent); and a sense of responsibility to one’s collective (52.7 and 50.7 percent).”

Does this mean they’re satisfied with their jobs? Not necessarily. At the drug plant, 43.4 percent said they were satisfied with their present jobs, and 42.5 percent in the copper works. What did that mean? It meant that the others “dissatisfied” wanted better jobs—and that is as it should be. Workers’ performances are often mentioned and criticized in the local press and wall papers. Did that matter to them? “Only 3.4 percent of workers in the drug plant and 6.9 percent of workers at the copper works felt they were ‘indifferent’ to what was said about their work publicly.”

The things that are said about their work—and themselves—deal with problems like absenteeism, coming to work late, being drunk, turning in bad work, misbehaving on the job, etc. Most workers evidently are quite sensitive about having such weaknesses and failings brought to public attention. This public censure is the main social force operating on workers (and others) and has to replace in socialist conditions the reason for working that fear of being fired does in capitalist conditions. For workers are not fired in socialist factories and plants. But *something* has to keep them up to the mark—and social criticism is the effective instrument.

An overall portrait of workers from both plants comes up with this:

"The investigation has shown that the majority of working people spend their free time with benefit for society and for themselves. Every tenth person having a complete secondary education continues to study at an institute or a technicum without leaving his job. A lot of time is devoted to books. At the copper works, 66.1 percent of the workers had read fiction books in the month preceding our studies; 33 percent—social and political literature; 47.2 percent—popular science books; and 49.9 percent—technical literature.

People who do not read at all or read very rarely numbered here just 3.8 percent. As many as 63.6 percent of the respondents (and at the drug plant—72 percent) said they have private libraries.

In the year preceding our investigation, 23.3 percent of the personnel of the drug plant had visited an opera and ballet theater, 40.9 percent a theater of musical comedy, 40.6 percent a drama theater, 23.7 percent symphony and chamber concerts, literary-drama evenings and Philharmonic Society chorus performances, and 45.6 percent variety concerts.

Art has become firmly established in our way of life. For comparison's sake, I shall cite the following figures: in France, for example, more than half of the population (58 percent) does not read books at all, 87 percent do not go to the theater, and among the theater-goers workers constitute only one percent. Soviet people boast a cinema attendance thrice as large as in the U.S., six times as large as in Britain and France, and nine times as large as in the Federal Republic of Germany. . . .

In our days, almost every family has a TV set and a radio, and subscribes to local and central newspapers. For 88 percent of those polled at the drug plant and 90 percent at the copper works mass media are the main means for learning international and national news."

This, then, from Soviet sources, statistically backed, is a picture of both the youth and the Soviet working class which any unbiased observer is bound to admit conforms to his impressions garnered from numerous visits to plants and factories as well as contacts socially. It shows a working class which is cultured (far beyond any working class in any capitalist country), educated, conscious of its role in socialist society, supporting that society, and becoming, more and more visibly, that "new man" inevitable under such circumstances, who has now become profoundly integrated in Soviet reality.

These workers in no way resemble the ones Shipler (and other denigrators) hold up to public view. The handful of self-seekers who do yearn for foreign-made clothes and think that a record from America brings them some sort of distinction do not go to Siberia to work on BAM, nor in the copper plants, nor auto factories. They are more likely to be social castoffs hanging around hotels and other places where you might meet a foreigner and for a cigarette, and more so for a bottle of whiskey, will give him any kind of quotes he would like to have.

But who admires them? Don't people laugh at them when they're young and hope they'll grow out of their childish infatuation with American gew-gaws in time and make something useful of themselves? And don't most of them do exactly that?

But what is the answer—the real, true answer—to the abiding question of why? Why do they go in their thousands to work under bitter conditions for almost an ordinary reward? Why do they put up their flesh against machine-guns to save their homeland? Why do they give up a day's work to help the Vietnamese and Kampuchians and the Afghans? Why did they risk so much to help the Cubans in their hour of need? And even, why did they give the Chinese all they had? Every human being who today raises his head above the dark horizon of oppression and looks for hope and help finds it—not in New York or London or Paris, or in Peking—but in Moscow. Why? Why do the Soviets respond? For power? For plunder? Afghanistan has no power to give. There is little in Ethiopia to plunder. To these countries and people it is the Soviet people who give—and they get in return not profits to choke a horse, no matter how big a horse you can imagine, but something else entirely.

It is the simple truth that the entire revolutionary and national liberation world—the struggle of the world's working class in the capitalist countries—the survival and strengthening of the socialist structures in newly-born developing countries—rests on the generous and sturdy shoulders of this self-sacrificing Soviet working class and the working class in other cooperative socialist countries.

Why, then, do they assume a burden that is as heavy as the world's misery and with endless sacrifice?

Because they wish, individually, Natasha and Ivan, working in Moscow or in the Urals, on the deserts of the Hungry Steppe or in the cold wastes of Kamchatka, to "make a noble contribution to the building of a new society".

But Mr. Shipler and all the little shiplers running around loose in the world hadn't noticed.

OTHER EXPLANATIONS FOR VISUAL EVIDENCE

"A fool sees not the same tree a wise man sees."

William Blake, *Proverbs of Hell*

But we're not through with Mr. Shipler yet—unfortunately. The lie is short—"John Doe is dishonest"—the responsible disproof takes a long time. For that, you have to gather material, interview witnesses, research records, etc. True, by the time you have done all that possibly nobody remembers or perhaps even cares why. But if it's your reputation at stake, you do. You go on with your answer way into the night.

And it's important to go way into the night to answer Mr. Shipler because we're not dealing here with just one man with one deck of marked cards. Shipler represents a policy behind which are guns. The aim of that policy is to set up the American people as ignorant and innocent—but prejudiced, brain-washed—ducks in a shooting gallery. People are assured the guns aren't aimed at them. But at the "enemy." And that there is an enemy and that it's right to hate an enemy and to hate one's enemy properly one must make him hateable.

Thus, Shipler.

The individual who wouldn't (possibly) lie to his wife or children or the tax-collector will resort to any kind of lie against his "enemy." Such lies are truth to him—to the cause he serves. Along this road Hitler led the German people—lie by lie straight to their graves.

So back to the flashy stranger with the diamond stick-pin and his marked deck of cards.

It's been noticed throughout the world that while Western youth seethed and raged in anger, marched in demonstrations, burned down buildings and blew up banks, Soviet youth, by contrast, went normally about their business, working, studying,

developing themselves, going to Siberia to work on BAM, or staying behind to marry, set up a family, etc.

How come?

This picture of a contented, busy, studious, earnest generation of Soviet youth contrasted dramatically with a frustrated, angry generation of Western youth, and presented a vexing problem to Western apologists.

They couldn't allow the possibility that Soviet youth actually approve of and find their development as human beings precisely in this actual, living socialism—in precisely Soviet socialist society—to be inferred from their visible behavior, and so they busily set about “explaining” it—or explaining it away, that is.

Some said that Soviet youth were so absorbed in career pursuits that they were indifferent to anything else but that. Others said, in addition to *that*—they won't let go of *that*—Soviet youth were so brain-washed that they could no longer think for themselves—which is why Voice of America is so solicitous about them—and so swallowed whatever version of life was handed to them by authority.

Since Soviet life is so obviously “repressive,” “dull,” “totalitarian,” encased in “numbing cynicism,” and so on—whichever raisin you want it's there—and yet since there was obviously no youthful resistance to it all—and if not from the youth, then from whom?—some kind of explanation had to be made. Although in the West youthful opposition to oppression was honored with police billies, prison and, in some instances, death, on the other hand, when the needs of propaganda were foremost, precisely this activity was pointed to as evidence that Western youth thought for itself and was not complacent. It's a case of heads I win, tails you lose.

Mr. Shipler, too, is honor-bound to try his hand at solving this enigma. He favors the second hypothesis. To wit: “This is a society uniquely equipped to maintain illusions about itself, so the failure of the Soviet dream cannot be expected to produce frustrations and bitterness as angry and corrosive as has the failure of the American dream. At their worst (don't wait around for that obligatory and balancing—“At their best”—*P.B.*)—the results can be seen in widespread complacency on jobs from which people know they will probably neither advance nor be

fired and in a numbing cynicism—" but you've already heard that tune.

Nothing, by the way, reminds me so much of that old vaudeville routine as does the writing of today's Shiplers on the U.S.S.R.

You know how it goes: "I got married yesterday." "Oh, that's good." "No, that's bad. My wife's mother came to live with us." "Oh, that's bad." "No, that's good. She's very rich, old and sick." "Oh, that's good." "No, that's bad. She's leaving her money to her cat." "Oh, that's bad." "Well, no, that's good. I have the cat. . ." And so on.

Now, Shipler: "In the Soviet Union nobody gets fired from his job." You: "Oh, that's good!" He: "No, that's bad. It makes the workers feel complacent and secure." "Oh, yes, that's bad." "No, that's good. That's why they don't produce like our hag-driven conveyor-line slaves. . ."

Or whatever. For him the glass is always half-empty.

But putting games aside for the moment, let's take a quick look at Shipler's charges—"at their worst."

There is a sociological theory, not necessarily enshrined in textbooks yet, which holds that it's possible to reconstruct the nature of almost anything by analyzing its garbage.

This theory claims that out of the peels, rinds, bones and coffee grounds dug out of the family garbage can you may determine what kind of people live inside the house and even how they'll vote next November. The FBI, as we know, religiously studied the garbage of suspected Americans and decided from what they'd raked up whether they were Communists, Republicans or just dog-lovers and cat-cuddlers.

This is exactly the method and the theory favored by professional anti-Sovietees. They hold that, out of an analysis of a handful of malcontents, opportunists, petty thieves, the light-minded, the lazy and incompetent of a country of over 260 million, it's possible to reconstruct a true picture of the society itself!

Its most distinguished, recent practitioner (Hedrick Smith) put his theory to work in a book which was then awarded the Pulitzer Prize, thus sealing the theory in gold.

Facts and figures play no, or a very miniscule, role in this

theory. Logic is told to leave town and get lost. The main method of establishing anything is by . . .

But let's take a look. Shipler treats us to a story. (His penchant for fiction here is given full play.) He says he met someone called Natasha in an airplane who however "declined to give her last name." Why? No explanation: but the implication is that people distrust each other in this untrusting society—why not kill two birds, or even more, with one stone?

As Shipler describes her, she is an "average, relatively happy Soviet teen-ager who loves her society". (This is how the vaudeville routine begins: "That's good!" But wait!)

For when you take the package home and unwrap it, you find that the contents are not what the ads say they are: for it turns out that what this "patriotic, average, happy" Soviet girl (in other words, the majority of the youth) "really wants," after she graduates from college (free, but don't wait to be reminded of that) is not to join the tens of thousands of her contemporaries on BAM (how does she earn the title "patriotic"?) but—according to Shipler—to grab the first plane for Moscow and when she gets there, to eat herself to death!

For it seems that this "average," "happy," "patriotic" Soviet girl, "who loves her society" but has no last name, is really nothing but a self-centered, consumer-mad, greedy "patriot" who wants "better food . . . clothing . . . housing. . ." (you need money for that!) and will do anything to get it but work for it!

Shipler asserts (which is all he does) that "getting to Moscow" is an absolute obsession with everybody in the U.S.S.R. and in their frenzied lemming-like drive to get there (for, after all, once you get there, what have you got?) they will do absolutely anything.

They—contrasted to the simple-minded "myth"-believing fools who go to work to BAM, to find "romance and adventure" there among the mosquitoes and mud—are just more of the girl in the airplane, clutching their university diplomas which "are less a ticket to a bright future than a shield against the need to do manual labor and menial work."

So the whole point—the only reason people want a higher education in the U.S.S.R.—is so they won't have to sit at a work bench or scrub a floor!

However, though such fictioners as Shipler go to extreme (in any but anti-Soviet reporting) risky lengths, they're still cunning enough to make sure that they don't come up with any facts you can see, touch, taste, or smell. All is impression. To one of the seven blind men who grabbed hold of a part of an elephant the elephant was "mighty like a snake." To another, like a tree trunk. And to a Shipler—a goose that flies upside down.

He tries his hand at tangling with Lenin—a risky business. But he tries it. To wit: "Thanks to Lenin's absurd dictum, 'Communism equals Soviet Government plus the electrification of the whole country', even remote settlements have electricity." ("That's good!" "Don't be a fool—that's bad") For . . . "their shops are barren. . ." Presumably all Lenin managed to do was to light up the shops in "remote settlements" so people could see better that there was nothing there!

Here we have a critic of Lenin's 1920 plan for electrifying the country a bit late in the day but still trying. We'll not quibble over the exact wording of the quote, which usually reads: "Communism is Soviet *power* plus the electrification of the whole country."

But what's "absurd" about the idea itself?

Lenin did not deal in aphorisms, and you can't make a little red book out of his "sayings." But the statement summed up a plan, whose success would propel backward Russia into the front ranks of modern industrial societies; it would lift Russia out of the darkness not only figuratively but literally, for ". . . if Russia is covered with a dense network of electric power stations and powerful technical installations, our Communist economic development will become a model for a future socialist Europe and Asia". (From "Questions Relating to Current Work of the Party," December 1920.)*

Emphasis on electrification at that time (1920) meant the industrialization of the country, and this idea was opposed, not to say mocked (by H. G. Wells, for one, who called Lenin a "dreamer") by opponents of the idea, led by Trotsky (and Company) whose "revolutionary" grounds were that it was not only

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 161 (fifth Russian edition).

utopian to hope that backward Russia could produce a "network of electric power stations" but absolutely pointless unless world revolution broke out immediately! (Ultra-Leftists always meet at some point with their blood-brothers-under-the-skin, the capitalists).

Today, of course, the Soviet Union is fully electrified, and its industrial capacity (which rests on various sources of energy but still largely electric) surpasses every country in the world except, for the moment, the U.S.A.

But what is one to say of a scribbler whose ignorance is so extreme, matched only by his malice, that he dares to refer to Lenin as "absurd" and still asks to be taken seriously?

This same "absurd" Lenin had been reported by *The New York Times* as having been overthrown more than 90 times—and here, 60-odd years later, they're still trying to overthrow him!

This Lenin is the man whose vision lights up the world, and when the people of Africa, Asia and Latin America lift up their eyes from the dust into which they had been ground for centuries, they see first Lenin's red star shining on top of the Kremlin. His words, which inspired those Russian revolutionaries years ago to storm heaven and bring it down to earth, still inspire millions of people all over the world to struggle for their freedom. It is to the eternal shame of America that that struggle for freedom is so often a struggle against American tanks and guns!

Just a bit more and we're finished with Shipler—hopefully forever.

The rest of his piece in *The New York Times* (as well as other pieces in the same paper) is a jumble of non-sequiturs, of self-contradictory "seem" 's and "appear" 's, with words like "cunning" and "corrupt" and "privileged" strewn on every page, one put-down leaping over the last—gone before you can nail it.

Shipler manages to touch every anti-Soviet base on his rounds of institutionalized slander of Soviet socialist society, and—to change the image—to try to unpeel each slander from its poisoned skin to examine its insides would take a whole book.

For example, he claims (again with no wheres, whats, whose, whens, whys, or whatevers) that for anyone to advance, to

“make it,” in Soviet society he must be a Party member (of which there are only about 7 percent in the population: the other 93 percent presumably just pitch manure all day); that to get an apartment one must bribe somebody (about 90 million people have gotten new or better apartments since 1971 up to 1979: a lot of bribery, that!). In short, even to survive in the U.S.S.R. one must become adept in the arts of swindling, lying, bribing, etc.—inspired only by motives that are vile for ends that are despicable.

Despite revolutions and wars, socialism, according to Shipler, has produced a system whose moral level is no higher than capitalism’s—but lacks the delights of Las Vegas, porno shops, and a volley of gun shots in Dallas, Texas!

The *fact* is that Shipler smuggles into the Soviet scene both ideas and personality types that are typical only of American life. He recapitulates the general American’s ignorance of Soviet reality, which he and his predecessors helped first to create, and then milks it without mercy.

Even so, he’s afraid of a simple fact. He sticks completely to “interpretation”, to “impressions”. That is, to fiction.

He will charge, for instance, that the working class in this workers’ state is really badly off, and in fact, so contemptuously are workers looked upon generally, he will say, that there’s a veritable stampede by workers themselves to desert the factories and mills for the soft, plush jobs of the intellectual “middle class”.

Which, of course, is sheer nonsense. Being a worker in the U.S.S.R. is not a calamity or disgrace. It is an honor. Shipler here exploits, in typical fashion, American middle-class prejudices against the working class which are rampant in the U.S.A. where the working class (when it’s admitted to exist at all) is put down, as Carter made clear in a press conference, (May 11, 1977) as a “special interest group,” like the gun-lobby or the marihuana lobbyists. So though it creates the wealth of the country the best Labor gets back from those it supports is a kick in the teeth!

In the Soviet Union the working class is not a “special interest group.” It runs the country. It’s in power. In fact, the entire direction and the actual flavor of Soviet life are determined by

the working class, from which the society mainly recruits its legislators and ruling personnel.

Many workers are far better paid than are intellectuals or office workers, better than doctors, lawyers or dentists! Workers control, through the trade-unions, most of the social service system (vacations, health resorts, training schools, workers' housing, etc.) All one need do to see a modern-day miracle is to go to the Bolshoi any day of the week and take a look at both the audience (of workers and farmers--and American tourists) and the performers (exquisite, last-word-in-art perfection) and behold this astonishing fact: where once these dancers and singers performed for Czars and the nobility, today they perform for men and women in working clothes sitting in the same gilt-edged chairs their one-time masters did!

Lenin was not crazy about the Bolshoi, though he conceded it should go on. He wanted at the time when money was scarce to put it first into the villages for schools and teachers to teach illiterate children how to read and write. Now, the grandchildren of these illiterate children crowd the Bolshoi and applaud performers who also are the grandchildren of those illiterates!

To pretend, therefore, as Shipler does, that the working class in the U.S.S.R. feels wretched, neglected and patronized is a brazen forgery, much in the style of his colleague, Craig Whitney, whose snobbish disdain for the working class is typical of the middle-class pusher who is trying to make it, for whom a job in a factory or a coal-mine is a sentence of death!

Finally, almost everybody of those Western reporters who sets out to paint the Soviet Union ends up painting his own portrait. Malice will find malice. Thieves will find thieves. The cynical wit from New York will inevitably find his boon companion—the cynical wit in Moscow. The degenerate from the U.S.A. inevitably smells out his fellow degenerate in the U.S.S.R. even if he has to go beyond the Urals sniffing. In conjuring up his kind of Soviet Union, Mr. Shipler has managed to show us, not what a Soviet man is like, but what an American is like—those who “make it,” who “get ahead.”

And how do you know in America that you're ahead? Because the man behind you has the print of your foot on his face.

Do you know where the Buryat autonomous republic is? Do

you know what a Buryat is? Do you know what an “autonomous republic” is?

Mr. Shipler doesn't seem to know either, though he says he's been there and mingled, even if he couldn't mix, with them.

The Buryat Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic is in Siberia right up against Lake Baikal, which is the largest fresh-water lake in the world, and its water is being kept fresh by strict laws.

Before the Revolution of 1917, the Buryats, like so many other “minority” peoples, were not only subject to the natural difficulties of the region itself, and they are harsh, but were oppressed and exploited by Czarist Russia.

They had no written language. They lived in huts and yurts, a nomadic existence. Disease and the hard life were pushing them well on the way to oblivion—until the Revolution snatched them literally back from the very edge of extinction.

This is a tale told by many Soviet “minority” peoples. But to each of them, as to the Buryats, it is a tale that can never grow old or tiresome. Since the Revolution, the Buryats increased their numbers, their living conditions improved, they acquired a written language, and they began to publish books in that language.

They administer their own affairs, run their own schools, where their children are taught in their native language, their courts have Buryat judges, their hospitals Buryat doctors. In fact, they run their own lives as part of the Soviet Union. That's what “autonomous” means: within the general laws of the Soviet Constitution they live as they choose.

Today every fourth Buryat goes to some sort of school (children and adults both), “more than a thousand young Buryat men and women are studying in the universities, colleges and specialized technical schools throughout the country” (*Zabai-kalsky Rabochy*, December 26, 1979); for their children they have Pioneer houses, music schools, boarding schools, sports, libraries, and so on and so on.

They're proud of all that and proudly show it off to any visitor, expecting him to feel the same way they do about their obvious progress. One such visitor was Shipler on a cold winter day.

And what did he see?

He reported, "on the basis of visual evidence alone," not that the Buryats, for whom books themselves had never existed before, were reading books, nor that their numbers are growing when only yesterday they were about to be among the forgotten peoples of history, but that—though they inhabit apartment buildings, where they live side by side, schools where their children sit side by side, nevertheless they do not mix with the Russians themselves! Proof? It seems "interracial marriages are rare", says Shipler!

His piece is headlined: "Buryats Mingle but Rarely Mix"—a headline which, if you read no further, you would take for a recipe for some kind of new salad.

For Shipler's sake, to convince him that Buryats mix with Russians, a quota of interracial marriages would have to be established, and mutual trust and tolerance would be graded on a rising or falling scale of such marriages!

Meanwhile, Whitney, Shipler's side-kick for the *Times*, had written a piece in which he charged that "millions" of old people were starving to death in the Soviet Union (or keeping alive by stealing)—"millions who receive nothing" that is, no pensions. I treasured this particular article ("The Elderly Under the Soviet Pension System," November 18, 1978), for one gem in it, much as I treasured Shipler's piece on the Buryats for another gem.

Whitney, uneasy himself at the preposterousness of his charges—when everybody knows or should know that social security in the U.S.S.R. covers everyone who works or who is incapacitated from cradle to grave—stuck in what he hoped was a saving clause, "even allowing for other explanations" of why "millions" of people aren't dying in the streets though by his lights they had to be.

I mounted this gem with Shipler's "on the basis of visual evidence alone" and came up with my own literary diadem: "On the basis of visual evidence alone, and even allowing for other explanations, it seems to me that *The New York Times* reporters were not telling the truth about the Soviet Union."

So much for Mr. Whitney with the X-ray eyes and Mr. Shipler with his own particular "visual observation." Mr. Whitney can

cram a global conflict in your back yard and find hunger where hunger is not—but which, he hoped, would make its appearance after Mr. Carter has spoken.* Those who look at the socialist world through their cracked mirror will see only their prior prejudices reflected back at them in bitterscript and the actual grandeur of the building of Communism will pass them utterly by!

* He was disappointed. Nobody in the USSR missed a meal in all of 1980 except those trying to lose weight, and there are many of them today! As for Mr. Carter—the American people sent him back to his peanuts.—*Auth.*

MUST JESSICA DIE?

“Blessed shall be he that taketh the children: and throweth them against the stones.”

Book of Common Prayer. *Psalms*

†

For months in 1978 all newspapers in the United States, led by *The New York Times*, featured the heart-wrenching story of a Jewish couple in Moscow, Boris and Natalya Katz, whose 7-month-old daughter, Jessica, was dying of a disease which the Soviet doctors could not—and would not—treat.

It seemed that what Jessica needed for her type of intestinal ailment was a kind of baby food that was beyond Soviet ability to make. But Americans knew how to make it! And were only too willing to send carloads of it to Moscow. But the Soviets, too arrogant, or, as the *Times* would say, too “heartless” to admit this fact—though Soviet science knew how to send men into outer space and even grow things there, somehow they failed dismally when it came to baby food—refused to let Jessica and her parents go to America and to life.

As any movie-going American knows this script, with some variations, has been run through millions of American cameras to millions of American movie-goers and has soaked millions of handkerchiefs millions of Saturday afternoons. Shirley Temple seems to have played in no other movie her whole child-life long. All that was missing in this particular script was a puppy dog with a hurt paw.

With this in its teeth, the American press (and the entire media) really went to town, ringing every tearful change on the theme, climaxing finally in this editorial from *The New York Times* (March 18, 1978):

Must Jessica Die?

Does the Soviet Union employ experts whose only function is to advise on behavior that will make the Kremlin look

monstrous? What other explanation can there be for the heartlessness displayed by the Soviet bureaucracy in the case of the 7-month-old Jessica Katz of Moscow?

The baby suffers from a serious intestinal ailment that threatens her life. She has survived so far only because of special food sent from the United States. Soviet doctors admit that the case baffles them, but a group of doctors at Harvard School think they can help Jessica if she is allowed to come here for treatment.

The reason given by the Soviet Foreign Affairs Ministry for refusing permission is that "there is no agreement between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare on exchange of patients."

For this must Jessica die?

Wonderfully written, its American humanitarian indignation is scornfully poised against the Soviet dragon of heartlessness, ignorance and just cold spite. Could any target be more vulnerable? In one incident everything you had ever wanted to hate about the Soviet Union had been concentrated, and you were invited to hate away.

The only trouble with that editorial and its charges was—none of it was true.

The truth, which came out by dribs and drabs in real Perils of Pauline sequences, and despite every attempt to hide it, revealed an entirely different story.

Not only were the Soviet doctors not "baffled" by Jessica's ailment, they had correctly diagnosed it from the beginning and had it very quickly under control, and by summer Jessica was on the way to full recovery. But why weren't the *Times'* readers told? Why did the agitation continue?

Well, it seems that there was skullduggery at work. When a Dr. Richard Feinbloom, of Boston, after speaking by trans-Atlantic phone to the Soviet doctors, confirmed that the diagnosis and treatment were correct, and said so to the *Times'* reporter, here is how that St. George of the press responded:

"We don't want to make this look too good or maybe the Soviets won't let them out."

So Jessica wasn't dying—it was the American press that was dying of its chronic disease—anti-Soviet propaganda. (Let's leave to one side the question of what kind of parents the Katz were to allow their child to be used so squalidly.)

Finally, the Katz did leave Moscow—and with a Jessica whose cheeks were "chubby" (*New York Times*) and who "appeared healthy." As indeed she was. And as for the Katz, so truly perturbed were they about the treatment of their daughter, that meanwhile they had gone ahead and produced another daughter there in Moscow! (Of course all hospital expenses paid by the Soviet people.)

So Jessica had not been dying—she had become a pawn in the Cold War. The whole affair had blown up in the face of American propaganda.

Which is par for the course. But in the past, when a well-laid scheme blew up the schemers instead, the cue was to forget it—wipe it out as though it had never happened. If it did its job—fine. If it's an anti-Soviet lie, it's truth enough.

But in this case, lo and behold, something unprecedented happened. Another editorial appeared in *The New York Times*. It read:

On Crying Wolf

Who was it that kept crying wolf? Or, to be precise, Katz? (There is wit in the editorial office—*P.B.*) The Katz baby is dying of a disease, went the cry, that only America's glorious medicine can cure, but those awful Russians won't let Jessica and her parents, Boris and Natalya Katz, emigrate. Progressively exaggerated in parental pleas, protest meetings, newspaper commentary and the petitions of congressment, Jessica's condition became an international cause even as the child improved. She arrived in the United States last week, with her parents and new-born sister, looking healthy and, it seems, feeling fit.

As U.S. doctors suspected from afar (but why didn't they print what the U.S. doctors "suspected?"—*P.B.*) the ail-

ment was correctly diagnosed by Soviet physicians last spring, when the baby was 6 months old, as a digestive disorder called malabsorption syndrome. Jessica's improvement began at about the time she started eating a special formula sent from the United States, but no one knows that it was necessary; she might have improved naturally, as so many other babies have.

The tale would end happily there if not for the awkward circumstance that many were led to believe (by whom? why so coy?—*P.B.*) that it offered a poignant example of Soviet callousness. Jessica, it was widely reported, might die not only because the Russians were reluctant to let Jews emigrate but also because they were paranoid about holding computer specialists like her parents and fearful that U.S. medicine might show up their own. We added our protest last May by wondering in these columns who it was that advised the Kremlin to pursue such "monstrous" policies.

Well, to the Russians, our apologies. They seem to have cared well for Jessica and cared enough about the world-wide hullabaloo that they swallowed their pride and let the Katz family go.

So far, so good. But the *Times* would hardly be itself if it let good enough alone. Having created the monster over decades of concentrated labor, it was not ready to give up all its calculated advantages thus achieved. So, with the same hand with which it had been beating its penitent breast and mumbling *mea culpa! mea culpa!*, it took a swing right back again in its old style:

No nation, of course, deserves congratulations for letting anyone emigrate. Perhaps the Soviet leaders will reflect on why so many people are always ready to believe the worst of them. (This is a laboratory example of pure *chutzpah*—having cut off the man's legs it's now offering to sell him crutches!—*P.B.*) If too many here cried wolf, it was because of the Soviet habit of passing off many a wolf as Little Red Riding Hood. (It was the Soviet fault, after all.—*P.B.*)

But here, perhaps for the first time, comes a rebuke to those holy of holies in America, the Zionist gangs:

The Jewish organizations that seek to dramatize the plight of Soviet Jews need to think over the temptation of riding with a "good" but erroneous story. They also need to think again about their tactics in general. The restrictions on Soviet emigration are deplorable, but that does not make every potential refugee a victim of special persecution. Nor does it justify every form of counterattack, from misleading propaganda to trade restrictions.

The sting in the tail of this paragraph raised a howl in the Zionist gangs. Mild as it was—contrasted to what could and should be said about the gigantic propaganda machine owned and controlled by American Jews, who are not even Zionist in the sense that nothing could persuade them to go to Israel—nevertheless the editorial warning was such a case of *lèse majesté* that the reverberations continue to this day.

But to go on:

And the U.S. Press, we are sure, will reflect further on this affair. Jessica's improvement was in fact reported in dispatches to the *Times* and other papers (example: Dan Fisher, to the *Los Angeles Times*, after a typically tendentious reprise of the case, says—once the Katz' had their visas—that "Jessica has *apparently* (my italics—*P.B.*) recovered now, although U.S. doctors have indicated that it will be impossible to tell for sure without a thorough examination," (a totally twisted and still misleading paragraph in a long, typically slanted article—*P.B.*), but we doubt that the news ever caught up with the initial cries of alarm (which is always the case—*P.B.*) or the protests of highly placed officials like Senator Kennedy. Soviet dissenters and would-be emigrés have become practiced propagandists for their cause; sympathy for it need not overwhelm the press' customary skepticism.

As Aesop counseled in the tale of the shepherd boy and the wolf, liars are not believed even when they tell the truth. That practical wisdom aside, there is so much misery in the world, surely humanitarians do not have to invent more of it.

The New York Times

Referring to "Soviet dissenters" as "liars" and "practiced propagandists" was a blow that immediately raised a howl in precisely those lying propaganda quarters still festering in the back-alley holes and crannies of Moscow.

The Moscow "dissenters" made a dash for their friend, patron, and protector, *The New York Times* correspondent, David Ship-ler, whom we've already met, and poured out their pain and woe to him, who duly reported: "Leading Soviet dissidents angrily attacked the editorial board of *The New York Times* yesterday for an editorial December 5 apologizing for the Russians..." and goes into a heated defense of "31 dissidents" simultaneously warping the story in an expert way to fit the previous lurid tales that had streamed out of Moscow via the "Moscow reporters".

The pain and "anger" was not only the "dissidents'." For *The New York Times* editorial had all but called its own Moscow reporters "liars" and certainly had implied that they had been duped by "practiced propagandists." Later, we will see that Ship-ler, speaking again about the "dissenters," wrote in the spirit of, not so much a passive, neutral "reporter" of other people's words, but as a disappointed—well, *coach*, of someone who had missed his signals.

But the damage had been done, though it was only damage and not a mortal blow to the whole system of lying which passes for "reporting" and which continues to function, scarred though it is, serving not the people of the United States but, what is even more frightening, not even the stated editorial positions of their own newspapers!

For though Jessica did not die, other Jessicas well may die tomorrow. The stories that come out of the typewriters of the Moscow correspondents to Americans on the question of questions—what are the intentions of the Soviet Union toward us?—

also do not tell the truth. For on any day of their lives they can see that of all the people in the world the Soviet people are the most dedicated to peace. Everything in the Soviet Union proclaims that. It's as obvious as the air (which is clean) you breathe, and needs, for those breathing it, no extraordinary proof that it exists.

5

THROUGH A DARK GLASS DARKLY

"What will this babbler say?"
Acts of the Apostles, *The Bible*

A rough random selection from several months of news stories about the U.S.S.R. sent to the United States by American correspondents runs the gamut from the insanely slanderous ("Defector Says Soviet Pilots Have Suicide Order," AP, January 6, 1977—is the headline with the "story" claiming they're not supposed to "bail out in wartime emergencies") to the merely malicious ("Russians May Be Stirring Cuban Kettle in Africa," *International Herald Tribune*, April 14, 1978).

In no particular order, with each one a stand-in for ten others exactly like it, here's how they came to me:

Washington Post's Kevin Klose, in a July 4, 1978, story, finds that he can't abide crowds—a revelation more fitting for his doctor than for a newspaper. Another reporter complains that they don't speak English well enough at Leningrad airport and this constitutes for him as an air traveler an acute danger.

Someone from UPI (discretely anonymous) complains that he can't get his favorite American newspaper, with all anti-Soviet stories intact, at the Moscow corner newsstand, and feels, apparently, like those worthies who put out the notorious 1948 issue of *Collier's* that not only should *The New York Times* be available but also *Hustler*. *Collier's* had dreams of putting *Pal Joey* on the Bolshoi stage after the Soviet Union had been conquered and relegating *Swan Lake* to the attic. (March 24, 1978.)

Douglas Stanglin is worried about how single Russians—particularly women—manage to have sex—a theme he rings every salacious chime on—since rooms are not as easily available in Moscow for casual rendezvous as they are in New York City's

Times Square area. If he had somehow managed to remind his readers that if there are 170 women to every 100 men* it's because the war killed so many men in their prime, he could have pointed to this tragic, poignant fact as further proof of why the Soviets hate war so much and therefore will do almost anything for peace—but no. To Mr. Stanglin this human tragedy is only worth a snicker, and with the sure hand of pornographer and veteran bordello ringmaster he directs his reader's attention to smut and not to truth.

Dan Fisher manages to turn a wage rise for Soviet workers into a pretext for attacking the Soviet system, and in the process repeats every slander against the Soviet trade-unions and the life of workers in Soviet society that had ever been invented, but forgets to mention that as workers they own the industries they work for, their decisions on wages and working conditions are law—they *make* the decisions. (December 12, 1977.)

Victor Zorza, writing from Paris, however, but this is no impediment, also notes with some wonder that “without a single strike, without a cross word passing between labor and management... How was it done?” (Workers' wages raised in the U.S.S.R.—P.B.)

He doesn't really know though he has some ideas he's only too eager to share with whoever's passing. The main idea is that the Soviet worker is content with his income only because he doesn't see how well the West lives, though Zorza hopes that “industrial unrest is beginning to take shape” but sees those shapes, the way Polonius saw a camel, in the clouds. Incidentally this phenomenon of writers about the Soviet Union who start even the same sentence with one assertion and end it with the opposite (beginning—“without a cross word” and ending “industrial unrest”—opposites) is not rare, and in fact is quite explicable. For the hostile writers on the Soviet Union often have

* These figures are incorrect. According to the 1959 census, the number of women exceeded that of men by 20.7 million (there were 122 women to 100 men) as a result of great losses during the Second World War. This difference is gradually levelling out, and today there is approximately the same number of men and women in the age group of under 50.—Ed.

to contain glaring contradictions between their assertions and the facts and the attempt will often twist their sentences into pretzels. But to end up with Zorza: "The Soviet working class has shown little interest so far in the dissident movement, partly because it has seen a constant improvement in its standard of living since the death of Stalin". (*Herald Tribune*, October 28, 1977.) One may not often read such a thing!

Other commentators will deny that there is any rise in the standard of living at all but usually spare the reader any bothersome facts to back the assertion up.

Someone at AP (still discretely anonymous) declares that the diets of Soviet soldiers are deficient, and cites as authority for this statement an unnamed U.S. Army "analyst." That U.S. Army "analyst" is obviously the same German Wehrmacht "analyst" that told Hitler he'd be in Moscow in six weeks. (April 6, 1978.)

You go on (if you have the stamina) and read: "Dissident Says 28 Convicts Die in Soviet Paddy Wagon" (AP again) September 16, 1979, and the hair-raising story is so obviously insane (though sanctioned by a reference to a jailed "dissident") that it should have been thrown into the wastebasket—instead of being taken out of the wastebasket. It had to be denied a few days later.

Dan Fisher again finds that "Corruption (is) A Way of Life For Officials in Soviet City" and tries to puff up out of a few incidents in Baku an indictment of a whole people (Armenians), who will certainly not take to that kindly. (June 8, 1979, *Los Angeles Times*.)

Robert C. Toth, who had been earlier expelled from the Soviet Union as a CIA spy masquerading as a legitimate journalist, manages to keep up with his past bad habits, but now from Washington. His contribution: "Forced Labor Alleged Behind Olympics." And the authority for that "alleged" is another spy—"Nikolai Sharygin who spent 10 years in prison for alleged spying. . ." says Toth, wincing as he goes. (September 28, 1979, *Los Angeles Times*.)

Attacks on the Olympics, already begun, will most certainly increase (I predict with no fear whatsoever that my prophesies will turn out wrong) as the Olympics draw nearer, and certainly

while they're in session.* Already the "reporters" of Radio Liberty and the Voice of America—"reporters" in only the most extravagant, giddy definition of the word; actually most are spies or ex-spies, "dissidents," all paid by the CIA, now openly—have applied for accreditation to the Olympics, though they don't know a ball from a ballet slipper, but do know how to wring the neck of a fact when they find one.

Is there enough oil, isn't there enough oil, how about harvests, are they going to be short, why don't workers go on strike—on and on the stories run.

They are fired at the captive American audience from every direction. If they're not Craig Whitney, they're Walter Cronkite. If not the *Los Angeles Times* they're the *Washington Post*. If not *U.S. News & World Report*, they're *Time* magazine. If not NBC, they're Barbara Walter and her millions dollar mouth on ABC. Twist the knob, turn the newspapers, stuff your ears with cotton—they're at you, they come at you through the windows, the cracks in the walls, they drop down on you from the ceiling. There's no escape. No place to hide—to run to. The torrent of words is relentless, the noise flattens your brain, the incessant pounding drives you mad.

Journalists who come to the U.S.S.R. are not—to give them their due—usually trained or prepared to report the scene they find. The rules are different. The scene is utterly different. Here news is not someone killing somebody, or someone jumping out of a building. No minister calls a press conference to denounce another minister. No shady politician declares before the press that he won't lie to the people (Carter) or that he's not a crook (Nixon). The news is different—and, from the point of view of the Western journalist—boring. It has to do with planning—how much has industry produced this year, what is the harvest like, how the peace struggle is doing, what are the vacation plans for children this year, how about schools, how many more have been built, and prices, no changes in basics, in rent or utilities—all, all boring stuff. Where are the scandals? Where is

* The subsequent events fully confirmed the author's predictions. They showed that there had been a plot to prevent the Olympics in Moscow long before the events in Afghanistan.—*Ed.*

that story about a man killing people on orders from a dog? You won't find it; don't look. There are no "leaked" stories, no inside stuff; no planted tales to defame or decry, to instigate or provoke. As far as someone like Kevin Klose is concerned—whose training has been as a police reporter in Washington, DC—there's nothing decent in Moscow to write about! So make it up! Who's to stop you?

Though all American bourgeois reporters distort or misrepresent Soviet reality, some out of sheer incompetence—though, such being the law of anti-Sovietism, incompetence merges with malice and looks like any other piece of writing—nobody does it with greater venom and skill (though they slip up once in a while) than the reporters from *The New York Times*.

Hedrick Smith, who preceded this generation, wrote a book purporting to be based on his observations as a *New York Times* reporter in Moscow, and it became a bestseller—I'm even told the State Department advises tourists to read it first to prepare themselves for entry into the fearsome realms behind the Iron Curtain. In any case, the book won a Pulitzer Prize.

With such encouragement, it's hopeless to expect subsequent reporters to cut off their past honest noses to spite their present dishonest faces—nobody is awarded a prize for telling the truth about the Soviet Union.

Take Shipler again. He wrote an article, headlined "Rising Juvenile Crime Now a Major Soviet Problem." (*International Herald Tribune*, March 19, 1978.)

The deception starts out with the headline itself: "juvenile crime" was neither rising nor a major Soviet problem, and there was no evidence anywhere outside the magpie evidence that Shipler comes up with. Why magpie? Just as the magpie builds its nest out of every piece of junk that catches its attention—from pieces of newspaper to your grandfather's discarded uppers—so Shipler goes about it, dragging this little piece from here and that little piece from there and calling the whole makeshift result a "case" that the first good wind blows away, filling the air like a garbage dump.

He cites a number of crimes, which he culls from Soviet newspapers (but those newspapers, when it comes time to slander *them* he will claim do not expose negative Soviet phenomena)

at different times and from different places—Nizhnekamsk, Petrozavodsk, here-there-t'other, thousands of miles apart, and in the hallowed tradition of an American newspaper editor caught in the summer doldrums and needing something to sell his papers, creates a "crime wave." How? By simply listing that night's random crimes taken from the police blotter—that night no different from any other night—and slapping a scare headline on the hodge-podge—and presto! There's your "crime wave."

The trick sells newspapers. It's used to sell frame-ups as well.

In this article, as in his other articles, all the familiar devices parade by and can be ticked off: citing Soviet sources without naming them, transferring American phenomena to Soviet soil without explaining, offering as "proof" nothing more than subjective, usually malicious, impressions, being careful never to mention a place, a statistic or a name—a *fact*—that can be independently checked on.

He cites—with all the above as his authorities—as causes of juvenile crime in the Soviet Union "parental neglect, the abundance of alcohol, narcotics addiction, boredom and what some see as a profound amorality..." He also cites "overworked women... school classes too large..." and so on, wracking his brains for anything he can tack on to this boxcar that will seem credible and recognizable, not from Soviet experience, but from American. Needless to say, he cites no figures, no authorities—though he does occasionally cite as an "authority" someone who slanders *with* figures while he manages to slander without them.

Juvenile crime—Soviet species—is neither "rising" nor—much of it by American standards—to be classified even as "crime." No one whom I've ever spoken to and who is in a position to know agrees with Shipler. Even the casual visitor to the Soviet Union is struck by how orderly life seems to be, how safe one feels in the cities, and what little public evidence there is of crime, juvenile or adult. Night in the U.S.S.R. is not a time of terror. One can walk down any street—no mean streets at all—any time of the day or night and visit any park and be certain to come out as unscathed as one went in.

In October, 1978, I interviewed the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Lvov Region, in the Ukraine, V. F. Dobrik,

and, among other things, asked him (having Shipler's article in mind): "Is juvenile crime rising in Lvov?"

"No. It is falling. Our tendency is to eliminate it altogether. In nine months of this year, compared to last year, cases of violation of the law by teen-agers dropped 17 percent."

"How much is that in absolute figures?"

"That means there are about 100 cases a year."

"Out of a population of about 700,000?"

"Yes."

"And what kind of crimes predominate?"

"Mostly breaking into stores for candy and sometimes for liquor."

"But not murder, drugs, prostitution, pornography, selling presidencies and bribing reporters?"

"No."

I spent a whole evening once in Vilnius, Lithuania,* with the citizens' volunteer groups, the *druzhinniki*, which oversee social activities where young people gather, and what happened? Teen-agers at a dance got into scrapes, or they drank the vodka they brought with them (none on sale there), or horned in on the other fellow's girl—but it was all way within legal limits and never even remotely reached the murderous levels so often reached in the U.S.A. (to name only one, the horrors at the Rolling Stone Rock Concert at Altamont, California, when a Black was knifed in the middle of a huge crowd of totally stoned teenagers who had no idea where they were or what they were doing).

Nobody at this dance in Vilnius smoked marihuana, of which they knew nothing, and as for the hard stuff—they knew even less of that. At most they drank more than a teen-ager should.

In his article, but strictly in passing, Mr. Shipler notes that "Police precincts have juvenile divisions. Committees of teachers, labor unions, police and party officials often deal with juvenile cases out of court."

And that's all he says about that! But he shouldn't have hurried by so fast! For this is the heart of the matter. What it

* Described more fully in my book, *Beyond the Borders of Myth: From Vilnius to Hanoi*, Praxis Press, 1967.

reveals is that a network of social forces not only exists but functions, acting as a kind of restorative, protective and curative force—the conscious elements of society consciously organized to head off crime and where some boys and girls slip to bring them back safely again.

The cue here, as is typical throughout all of Soviet society, is to handle each human being not as some abnormal, disaffected *alien*, to be ostracized and set apart, but as one who has erred against his own interests, and who can be helped best, not by jail—unless he's incorrigible—but by continuing social contact.

His trade-union buddies take him in tow. At school, his teachers or school-mates lend him a helping hand. Healing forces are always playing on his senses and unless he is in some special way beyond this kind of help, then in the overwhelming number of cases he is restored to normal life again. Society is not his enemy or antagonist. He is not estranged nor alienated from it on an existential or any other basis.

Years ago, I talked about this question to the writer, Grigori Medynsky, whose novel *Honor* dealt with criminals, many of whom wrote him about themselves from prison after they had read his book. The last lines of one letter remain with me: "Whom did I rob when I robbed? I robbed myself!"

Until Shipler came along, the whole world was under the impression that if there was one thing about the Soviet Union that could not be gainsaid, it was its infinite care of children. Soviets boast that the only privileged class in their country are the children. And using one of Shipler's favorite devices—"on the basis of visual evidence alone"—it would seem to be so. Traveler after traveler, observer after observer, no matter what else he may have deplored, has invariably noted how clean Soviet children are, how healthy-looking, how well-fed, well-clothed, and well-brought-up. They give their seat to old people on bus and subway. They are polite. They respect parents and teachers. They are never abused in school. Physical punishment—unlike in England, U.S.A. and other countries—is illegal. They are taught, as Brezhnev noted in his speech celebrating the International Year of the Child: "To be kind and to be friends with others, . . . to live as good neighbors with people of every nation."

nality and color of skin, . . . to respect work and to use their knowledge in working for the benefit of all people.”

They not only all go to school but provisions for extra-curricular activities are extensive. In 1978 there were, for instance, 89,895 such extra-curricular establishments, which include 4,706 palaces and houses for Young Pioneers, 1,197 clubs for young technicians, 730 for young naturalists, and 222 for excursions and trips.

In summer, more than 53,000 Young Pioneer camps (for children up to 14) take care of millions of young boys and girls at little or no expense to their parents.

But, in addition to that, there are 7,087 music, art, and dance schools for children, not to speak of special schools for the handicapped—blind, deaf, crippled.

There are 122,300 pre-school *creches*—kindergartens—which take care of 13.2 million pre-school children. That’s up through 1978. But plans to build kindergartens for an additional 506,000 children for 1979 were already in the works. These kindergartens are both rural and urban.

There are about 70 newspapers and magazines published for children and more than 70 publishers who publish books for children in 52 languages. Every fourth film produced in the Soviet Union is for children.

As libraries close, or curtail their services, in the U.S.A.,* the network of libraries in the Soviet Union continues to grow. By 1978, there were 130,300 school libraries and more than 8,000 children’s libraries, stocked with over 880 million books and magazines. In 1978, 3,249 children’s books and booklets came out with an edition of 516 million copies in 80 languages—both Soviet and foreign. In 1978, there were 162 children’s theaters in which about 110,000 plays and concerts were staged. Movies gave about 12,000,000 showings for children that same year.

In 1978, there were about 550,000 hospital beds for children.

* “The Public Library, once a symbol of local pride, is fast becoming an endangered institution—a victim of declining tax revenues, rising costs and public indifference. . . In one community after another . . . libraries are paring their staffs, reducing hours and services, buying fewer books and periodicals, and postponing maintenance.” *U.S. News & World Report*, August 20, 1979.

Does this mean they were sick? No. It means that *prevention* of disease is foremost in the consciousness of Soviet health officials, and an extensive program of health care and examination includes preventive stays at hospitals and sanatoria. Children staying at sanatoria—about 700,000 did in 1978—continue their studies as special measures are taken to build up their resistance to disease. Only the rich can afford such *preventive* care elsewhere.

For kids who want to go into sport, there are facilities everywhere—some 5,948 sports schools in 1978 with about 2,000,000 children going to them.

Hardly a week passes by without its special event—including the Week of Children's Books, the Week of Music, Cinema, Theater, and in winter all kinds of winter events.

With all that readily accessible, attuned to every taste, interest and talent, how is it possible to be bored? A child has to be unusually un-endowed not to find an opening for his energies. If there are such children, they are obviously a-typical, not to say abnormal; in fact, not to say they don't exist at all.

How can the normal, average boy or girl find time or reason for delinquency—for crime? To be a successful criminal in the Soviet Union one has to *devote* himself to it—one has to put all his energies and his mind to *evading* the good things in life!

Actually, one cannot speak of "crime" in the U.S.S.R. in the same breath that one speaks of crime in the U.S.A. The word used for both is totally misleading.

To begin with, there are large areas of behavior in the U.S.S.R. that are denounced as criminal, "hooliganism," that would be dismissed in the United States as nothing more invidious than too-high animal spirits, as juvenile hi-jinks. Those more serious crimes that do occur are not expressions of a social system, but are a-symptomatic.

An expert on Soviet crime told me that most crime in the Soviet Union is what is called "impulse crime"—crime that takes place spontaneously, without plan, "on impulse," during some critical moment, under some special stress. A man may do something under the influence of liquor—or jealousy—or anger—that is not characteristic of his behavior otherwise. Such crimes are

not planned, are rarely repeatable, and although they may damage persons or property they are more accurately to be described as failures in character. There are no slums in the U.S.S.R., no ghettos, no organized crime syndicates, no gambling outfits, no Mafia, no pornography rings, no prostitution syndicates, no drug rackets, no illegal gun industry, no sense that a shadow power follows one's steps throughout life, sometimes merely duplicating, sometimes merging with that visible, open power which shows itself in a Congress, a Supreme Court, and a White House—a White House with an office where it's convenient for a Spiro Agnew to pick up bribes without being seen.

If in the U.S.A. the distinction between crime and not-crime, between crime and rebellion, crime as an expression of alienation, opposition, etc., no longer exists, if disgrace has been eliminated (if you're Nixon you go out and buy a new image), if it's more and more difficult to distinguish the point at which legal and normal commercial activity ceases to be legal and normal and becomes criminal—this is not so, not even remotely so, in the U.S.S.R. The distinction between crime and legality is very clear.

Mr. Shipler could hunt high and low and never come across an item like the following from *The New York Times*, of October 3, 1977: "On a typical school day, 110,000 children were dropouts or chronic truants, or absent 25 or more days in a school year. . . The Council also cited the fact that the estimated value of property stolen during school hours was \$162 million. In addition, when all costs of youth crime, law enforcement and security were added, the total reached \$511 million."

In 1975, 1500 New Yorkers were murdered. Of the murderers arrested (which is not the same number as those who commit murder—10 percent go uncaught), 54 were children under 15 years of age.

Youth in the middle teens were arrested for committing 5,276 robberies, 1,230 felonious assaults, 173 rapes, and 125 cases of sodomy.

In the school year 1974-75, in New York City there was a grand total of 6,811 crimes—not just schoolboy jousting, or what's called hooliganism in the Soviet Union, but *crimes* called *crimes* in any country in the world, committed by students

against teachers, against other students, and against school property.

This total included 1,872 incidents of assault, 474 cases of weapons possession (guns and knives), 594 bomb threats, 274 fires set, 678 cases of larceny, 291 cases of narcotics possession (only those caught), 58 sex offences, mainly attempted and concluded rape, 722 trespassing cases.

“Assault, mugging, vandalism and gang warfare are rampant in America’s schools, a federally financed study said today.” (UPI, March 18, 1976.)

Had it gotten better by 1979? Not visibly. A *New York Daily News* study of 950 schools found that crimes by schoolchildren had increased six times. And nation-wide, schoolchildren annually commit 120 murders, 13,000 armed robberies, 9,000 rapes, 210,000 assaults on teachers and adults, 208,000 thefts, with as much as \$600 million in school damage.

About 415,000 kids get hurt each year because the toys they play with are dangerous—either cheaply and inexpertly made, or pushed on children without safety devices or training, in the mad rush for profits. In January, 1977, at least 264 different pornographic magazines used children and an unknown number of films, books and photographs also used children for pornographic purposes. Each year, some 5,000 teen-agers commit suicide—twice as many as 10 years ago (1968-78).

These statistics, which I take no pleasure in citing, and cite them not merely to make a debater’s point—I despise that—but to drive home the point, which Shipler and his like try to conceal, that crime is *not* a universal phenomenon and no people are condemned helplessly to accepting it as an uncontrollable plague. Crime is not fate. Socialism can, and does, offer the key to controlling and then the perspective or eliminating crime altogether from the social scene. To conceal this fact is itself a crime.

One more point—the most contemptible of all. In his list of reasons why, in his opinion, juvenile delinquency is “rising” in the U.S.S.R., Shipler drops, casually, two words—“narcotics addiction”—with not a single further word of explanation, though he knows very well “narcotics addiction” simply doesn’t exist in Soviet schools, or among the population at large. By innocently dropping these two words, he is committing a forgery of his

own, of a most malicious kind. The intent is to try “subliminally” to slip into the American reader’s mind something similar to what he’d just read in his morning newspaper:

New York, October 11 (UPI) (1978)—More U.S. high school seniors than ever before are smoking marihuana, and nearly 10 percent of the 17,000 surveyed by the University of Michigan said they use the drug on a daily basis.

The survey, reported in the October issue of *Psychology Today*, indicated that marihuana use among 12th-graders has increased steadily in the last few years, peaking in 1977 at 56 percent—an increase of 9 percent over the previous year. . .

That sort of thing isn’t possible anywhere in the Soviet Union and to mention “narcotics addiction” without explanation—without, in fact, smiling—is not playing the game. It falls into the same category as Robin Knight forging a quotation from Lenin.

Crime as a way of life, as a philosophy, as a legitimate expression of social rebellion—even as a romantic concept—is a permanent feature of American life. It expresses the criminality of that life. It cannot be cured until capitalism is cured. And the cure of capitalism is socialism.

Post-Mortem.

After he had left the U.S.S.R., Shipler published a series of postmortem pieces, which are no more than a coda of what he had already written. He summed up his ideas about the Soviet people in a curious mixture of fact and fancy, in which the right hand never quite knew what the left hand was doing.

If he concedes that the hopes which the CIA have placed on undermining Soviet principles by American contacts were vain—“all this contact has not generated much pressure for change inside the Soviet Union—” he has to explain it, not by the firmness of Soviet principle, the devotion of the Soviet people to their socialist way of life, but by “reasons of Soviet culture that date back to before the Revolution.” Without noting the absurdity of what he is saying, Shipler goes blithely on practically crying that even *pre*-Soviet times are somehow *pro*-Soviet!

Why are the Soviet people so united around their leadership? Again: "Deeply rooted values that have prevailed since Czarist times foster a mystical respect for central authority"—but not so deep a respect that they didn't rise up and get rid of the Czar and their "mystic respect" for central authority!

All this results in "a society highly resistant to infection (the choice of the word is correct—an infection—*P.B.*) of the principles of individualism and personal freedom. . . . The old dream that contact with open societies would open the Soviet Union has faded." ("Open" equals "overthrow.")

He goes on even more sorrowfully: "Dissidents who take heavy risks in struggling for human rights . . . rarely turn out to be civil libertarians." In fact, some of them turn out to be—why not say so?—fascists.

He gives us a touching, parting snapshot: "A Soviet woman visiting the New York area several years ago maintained a stoic 'ours is better' . . . Then her hostess took her to a supermarket. There, the veneer cracked as the Russian woman stood amidst seemingly endless aisles of fresh vegetables, red meat and frozen foods—and wept."

But who *was* that "Soviet woman" so discreetly veiled in anonymity? It's a good thing I was in that same supermarket that Shipler says she was in, or you would never know that that "Soviet woman" was actually . . . Natasha! Of course, Natasha with no-last-name whom we had met with Shipler on an airplane before, and we recognize her immediately because she's "patriotic, average, happy," etc., unmistakable signs of Natasha, who, never having gotten off the airplane, landed somewhat to her surprise at New York's Kennedy and passed in and out of a supermarket where she broke down and bawled. So many lettuces!

So this was the American Dream, though shattered, still furnished with enough goodies to send almost anyone into tears! Mr. Shipler wasn't playing honest with us when he told us that the American Dream was just an illusion. He meant that the Soviet Dream alone was the illusion. The American Dream had lettuces!

But this isn't all. I took Natasha by the hand, after she'd wiped her tears away, and led her to the meat counter. "See that

red, shining hamburger?" I said. "Do you think that's red, shining hamburger? Alas, nyet. That's God-knows-what meat, which has been sprinkled with red dye."

"Red dye?" she said in horror.

"Yes, red dye. That's in order to make it look fresh and to cover up the old meat underneath. Now, when you take it home, although by law it's supposed to have no more than 30 percent fat in it, this hamburger will most certainly have 80 or 90 percent fat and when you've fried it, there won't be anything left to eat."

"Nyet!" she cried. "Impossible. People don't do things like that in America!"

"Don't they? Ask Ralph Nader!"

Since I've developed a distaste for Natasha—let me be frank about it—I had no pity on her. "Do you see those steaks? Seeing them is all that you will ever do. Do you notice the price? Natasha, dear, you don't have the price to even smell that steak! Let's go to the lettuce. Taste that lettuce—go ahead, just a piece of it—but be careful. See those cameras? They're looking at you! Every motion you make those cameras see—so be careful; I'll stand in between. Well?"

"It tastes like paper."

"Well, it may even *be* paper. But we won't buy it because if we buy it we'll be scabs. For you see the farm workers in California are trying to form a union, with Cesar Chavez. The great farm owners pay them—who are Chicanos, some of them from Mexico illegally without papers—hardly enough to keep alive, let alone buy the lettuce which they pick. Their children also pick it. These children are often no more than 10 years old, don't go to school, travel from field to field, pick fruit and vegetables which are soaked with chemicals, that, the government has said softly, is cancer-producing. But don't worry! Cancer won't show up for 20 years or so. Meanwhile you can be care-free. But, Cesar Chavez has begged us—you and me—not to buy lettuce, nor grapes, nor anything else picked by scab labor. Tell me, Natasha, are you a scab?"

"A scab?" the poor bewildered woman cried. "I don't even know what that means!"

"Well, you're in America now, and you'd better learn quickly what that means. But let's go on. Well, let's skip it. This is

what we Americans call junk food and sell only to Puerto Ricans, Blacks and the poor. And talking about the poor, take a look at the people at the check-out counter. Do you notice that they pay no money?"

"No money! Have I found communism in a supermarket in New York City?"

"Alas, no, my dear Natasha. You are not a very well informed woman. What you see are people paying the cashier *stamps*—it's a new kind of money. It's 'poor money.' Tens of millions of Americans do not earn enough money to stay alive so the big-hearted government, owned by men who own the industry and pay these workers too little to stay alive with, decided to use the taxpayers' money to expand their income artificially. For every dollar they earn, they may buy back X amount in stamps, which is worth more than the dollar. This is how they manage to buy enough food to live on. But, like the very rich who also do not handle money but only cards, they have their own 'money'. Did you know that?"

"I didn't know they had Poor Money in the American Dream!"

"Well, Shipler didn't think to tell you. Which is understandable since he never knew your last name and didn't quite trust you. But let's go on."

"Is there more?"

"There is more. I'm sorry, Natasha, but since you broke down and bawled at the sight of so much lettuce you deserve the full tour. Now, since it's advisable not to buy that hamburger unless you want to come down with food poisoning, let's buy something that's perhaps more reliable. This? Well, let's read what it is. *Bread*. Read it."

"But I see no flour in it," Natasha whispers, as she reads, "it sounds like a list of chemicals."

"It is a list of chemicals and they will burn out your insides. Do you really, dear little innocent Natasha who cries so easily, think that the whole world makes bread that's fresh and healthy as they do in the U.S.S.R.? Don't you know what the drive for profit means?"

She does—she's heard about it in "the long ago." But she didn't think the animal was still around.

“Well, we’re here, and we’ll pick up something—these frozen strawberries—don’t read what chemicals keep them red and fresh-looking! If we keep doing that we will starve to death because we will never find any food that is not chemically treated and is not a menace to our health. Console yourself that cancer usually takes 20 years to develop.”

I lead her to the check-out counter and suddenly—there we are staring into the open end of a pistol. On the other end is a nervous young man, who has just stepped out of the American Dream, and is demanding money from the cashier. She, a desperately frightened little girl, scoops the money into a brown paper bag and hands it to him.

“What is that nice-looking young man, who is so well-dressed, doing?” Natasha asks me cheerfully. “And why is that girl giving him all that money? Isn’t she kind?”

“Shh!” I stick an elbow in her ribs. “Keep quiet! Do what the others are doing!”

Everybody in the store, as though rehearsed, have taken up positions of waiting, politely, until the little ritual at the cashier desk is over—they know what to do as though they’d been through it a thousand times before.

Finally, the bags of money are passed over and the well-dressed young man runs.

“What happened?” Natasha asked.

“That was a holdup,” I explained. “And that instrument with a little hole at the end of it, pointing right at you, was a gun. Do you know what a gun is?”

But answer came there none.

Natasha had fainted.*

* Unlike *New York Times* writers, the above is, alas, not fiction, but fact. It actually happened—though her name was not, I’ll admit, Natasha. But it happened. I looked at the end of that gun!

PART TWO

RIPOSTE

"Tell the truth and shame the devil."

Saying

A SOVIET PARTRIDGE

“‘Tis an ill cook that cannot lick
his own fingers.”

Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

The illusion that the American reader gets from stories sent to him by his Moscow correspondents is that the Soviet people are agitated about the same things that agitate him.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Time and time again, sometimes in puzzled tones, sometimes in vexed, Moscow correspondents will note that apparently nobody in the Soviet Union but themselves are concerned about the “dissidents.” They will say, often peevishly, that though for them—and therefore for the world!—the “Jewish question” is the wheel on which all Soviet life turns, little evidence in the Soviet Union itself exists to support that notion. Why, they will complain, has the “human rights” campaign been such a dud in the Soviet Union?

And they will come up with explanations that straining at the gnat swallows the camel. *The New York Times*' David Shipler, for instance, scarcely manages to conceal his exasperation behind his, “This is a society uniquely equipped to maintain illusions about itself. . .”

In other words: I don't know why!

I am standing outside of a Leningrad ballet theater. The sky is overcast. Thunder comes to us from the West and we wait under the protection of the theater marquee till a trolleybus arrives. Behind us (I was with my interpreter) stood two women, also waiting. Said the taller one to the smaller one: “Afraid! You who survived the bombing of Leningrad, afraid now of a little thunder!”

There she was—this little old woman, shrinking from the raindrops and looking distrustfully up at the sky!

Wasn't that wonderful—this woman who had heard bombs dropping day and night for years during the war, to be afraid now—a civilian once more—of thunder, of rain? These are *peaceful* fears—these are the fears of children, the fears of happiness.

In literally a lifetime of reading Moscow correspondents I've never seen in all their dispatches anything like that. And yet they quoted endlessly from anonymous "people in the crowd," all of whom are epigrammists, witty, and—hate socialism. Never, for instance, do they seem to come across the following kind of incident. Scene: subway. A man reading a book. A girl sits down beside him. Without even looking at her, he brings the book over to her. "Look," he says. "Read that." He's a complete stranger to her, but she takes the book obediently. It's poetry. "Isn't it wonderful?" he urges her. "Yes," she says, "it is. This is my stop." And she gets off. Strangers. No Natasha.

Why, in all their snoopings, have Kevin Klose, David Shippler, Craig Whitney, Robin Knight—all of them—never heard anything like that? They have ears as I do. Some of them know a better Russian than I do. But their ears are attuned only to slander and slander is all they "hear."

In the following pages I'll deal with what I myself have seen, heard, witnessed. I cannot see the whole world in a glance, so what I report is that slice of reality I managed to see myself. And if I see a partridge in a pear tree, I will not say it's a buzzard in the Kremlin just because it's a Soviet partridge!

A CITY OF PIONEERS

“Hast thou found me,
O, mine enemy?”

Kings, *The Bible*

†

My first assignment in the Soviet Union was not, properly speaking, a reporter's assignment at all. I was invited, in my role of a film critic, to speak at a forum on the 75th anniversary of the birth of Sergei Eisenstein.

The forum, to which specialists in the works of Eisenstein had been invited from a variety of countries, was held in the city of his birth, Riga, Latvia.

The same day I returned from Riga I boarded a plane with a few bourgeois correspondents and set out for Siberia.

To go to Siberia in the middle of winter seemed insane to me. But we did.

Snow. Cold. There is no surprise here. The first surprise will come when we learn that Novosibirsk is a city of a million and three hundred thousand people.

Lenin once was here during his exile. It was then, looking over the forlorn landscape in which snow—endless, relentless white—dominated everything, that he nevertheless saw a future there, our today's present.

It's astonishing, in a way, to realize, as you go about your daily business, absorbed in the demands of your own life, your eyes crowded with the images of your city, your environment, with no other concerns than yours seeming more important, to realize (if you do) that there are millions of people all over the world, living in towns you never visited, never even heard of, whose names you don't know, people who also go about their business, absorbed in their own lives, which seem most important to them. You intrude on this self-absorption like an interloper. You are astonished that they've been here all the time, going to

movies you've never heard of, reading books in a language unknown to you, getting born, growing up, working, marrying, bearing children of their own—and doing all this, as it were, without your knowledge and, almost as an impertinence, without your permission. If *The New York Times* has been the most important thing in your day, it's surprising (you're surprised later at your surprise) that millions of people exist—like these here—for whom *The New York Times* is nothing—nothing at all.

Americans are used to thinking of themselves as living at the hub of the universe. What they think is *worth* thinking. What they feel is what is *felt*. Their prejudices, likes and dislikes, have universal standing. Somehow, they *matter*.

But, here, in Novosibirsk, in a city that is far off in the one-time wastes of Siberia, what *The New York Times* writes does not matter.

What does matter, however, is what Novosibirsk thinks.

When the cold winds come to Siberia about October, they say that in every household women, men and children furiously start rolling little balls of flavored meat into flour—thousands, perhaps millions of them—and then they cache these Siberian dumplings, which they call “pelmeni,” in nature's own refrigerator just outside their windows.

For months every household smells temptingly of pelmeni soup, pelmeni fried in rich, locally-churned butter, still faintly smelling of Siberian clover, pelmeni boiled—pelmeni cooked in a dozen and one ways, succulent and mouth-watering always.

The Revolution comes, and with it eventually also come electric refrigerators. But bringing refrigerators to Siberia is bringing coals to Newcastle—ice to Iceland. They are accepted, but only tolerated—a concession to progress. But refrigerators have no roots in tradition or legend. And even today, as you travel about the city, a stranger, knowing that the revolution had brought electricity everywhere—color TV, radios, telephones, huge computers, and refrigerators, too—there is one thing it did not bring: a better way to “cure” pelmeni.

From every window, you see pelmeni bags hanging “getting the air”; and you are told that these bags of pelmeni don't taste

the same if kept in refrigerators. They must have the real, Siberian clean, cold air.

So these Siberians have their stubborn traditions. And though they welcome technology—and in fact create a great deal of it—as a tool, they are far from letting technology wipe out hard-earned ways of life, which are so intimately connected with their very struggle to exist. Most Siberians are not native-born. They come from everywhere—you will meet ex-Russians, ex-Georgians, ex-Ukrainians, and so on. But the miraculous thing is that once they set foot into this cold land, and send down roots below the permafrost, they forget where they came from and become that special species of human being—a Siberian.

The Nazis know them well. They will never forget them. For when, in June, 1941, they crossed the Western border of the Ukraine, of the Baltics, into the U.S.S.R., they crossed the border that brought Siberia to them. No German got to Siberia (except as a prisoner) but they met Siberians at Moscow, at Stalingrad, along every foot of the way to Berlin, and in Berlin itself where those Siberians helped raise the red flag.

It cost the Siberians dearly. You can find a memorial on the outskirts of Novosibirsk where an eternal flame is guarded by two rigidly-at-attention young soldiers, who stand there day and night, even in sub-zero weather, in rain, in heat, between the darting flame which burns always and the huge concrete steles on which the names of 33,000 men—*boys*, most of them, no older than the boys guarding their memory and with the same young faces—are inscribed.

They came from Novosibirsk but they died in places as far from home as Prague, Belgrade, and Berlin. They left behind 33,000 women they might have married, or had now widowed. (There are still more women than men in the city.) They left behind thousands of children without fathers, and thousands more never to be born. They left a memory that is drenched in blood—and, yes, those prosaic dumplings of which they had dreamed all the way through Europe and died without ever tasting again.

It was not only the food they missed. It was the taste of their native land. They missed their songs, the grandeur of their hori-

zonless steppes, the authentic memory of home, the knowledge deep in their bones that the good things of life come hard.

Everything comes hard here. And so one learns the value of everything: trees, houses, cities, and people. People, especially. You put a great deal of work in growing a child into a human being here—and you don't want to see him out down before his prime. Or ever.

The Siberians who died in World War II—or, as they call it here, the Great Patriotic War (and in America, the Unknown War) are grandchildren of Siberians who died in the same struggle before them. In a memorial garden, not far from the opera house in the middle of the city, 104 Siberians lie buried. They had been massacred by White Guard cut-throats when revolutionary Novosibirsk, still known then as Novonikolayevsk, was recaptured by the counter-revolutionaries in May, 1918.

Americans had sent an expeditionary force to Siberia—one should be reminded of this from time to time—and Siberians while wanting to get along with Americans also remember it. As I listen to these stories of courage and death—of revolutionaries, among them women, who died here, I stand silently in tribute to their distant martyrdom, the echoes of which move quietly in the cold air. The bourgeois correspondents stand—cold.

Chikski state farm is located a few kilometers outside of Novosibirsk and supplies this city with its meat and potatoes. It also supplies it with wheat, oats, rye and barley, with milk, pigs, sheep, and 150,000,000 (count them) eggs a year.

How do they do it in a land where once it was believed no grain could be raised, where the summers barely made an appearance and the winters were too long, too cold?

This farm is a state farm. There are two types of farms in the U.S.S.R.—state and collective. The state farm belongs to the people through their state. The collective farm belongs to those farmers who joined together to make it.*

* The state farm (sovkhoz) is a state enterprize like a plant, a factory, a mine, etc., where the means of production are state property. The entire output of the state farm belongs to the state. The state farm is managed by an administrative body appointed by the state.

This one was run by a staff of efficient-looking managers who controlled everything that happened on the farm—which included six settlements—from a central command post. A map with twinkling lights on it showed them where this or that was located or happening. They communicated with workers in the field or in the dairy or workshop by telephone and radio.

These officials, who are all graduates of colleges and universities, are quite proud of their achievements, and when they bring 24 half-frozen journalists together in a little room with desks like a children's schoolroom, they assume the gathered journalists will be as eager to get the facts about their successes as they are to give them.

Not so. Not all of them. Among us are six representatives of the bourgeois press: *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, Reuters, Agence France-Presse and a woman from Sweden.

They take their seats in the little classroom with bored expressions. Of what interest to them are those rows of faces alongside the walls? They are the pictures of men and women who have distinguished themselves here on the farm. How? Milking more cows than ever before? Who cares?

They're not interested. The statistics will sail over their heads. The facts will die in the egg, all 150 million of them. The citations of accomplishment—the flag awarded to the farm—such things will hang in their heads like dry beans.

This isn't what they came for. They don't care about martyrs, and their editors care less. They don't want to hear about success. They want to hear about failure.

They are here “. . .as spies, to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.” They were known as far back as the Bible. So tales about eggs, how much butter they churned last year, how many new houses were built bore them.

The collective farm is a collective form of economy, where the means of production, with the exception of the land, are the collective property of the peasants—members of the collective farm. The peasants' output obtained from the socialized field or farm belongs to the collective farm and is dealt with at their own discretion. The supreme organ of a collective farm's management is the general meeting of its members, which elects a board headed by a chairman for every-day management of the farm's activities.—*Ed.*

The reporters from the socialist countries are different. They come from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Cuba, and the problems solved here by the Soviets interest them intensely: they want to know the facts, as their readers do, because the facts can help them to solve the same or similar problems in their home countries.

But what good is it going to do *The New York Times* reporter to know how to run a socialist farm? In America, the farms are owned by corporations—they are monopoly-owned, “agribusinesses.” You will read, in the *Washington Post* later, this item: “September 16, 1979—

“The Senate rewrote federal reclamation law last week in such a way as to leave most of the huge agribusiness empires in the West intact, but the action, which fell short of Carter administration proposals, is expected to face tenuous going in the House.

“Prompted by a phalanx of lobbyists representing larger irrigators, the revisions of the 1920 Reclamation Act would exempt at least 2.3 million acres some of the world’s lushest crop land from acreage limitations originally set to promote small farms.

“Because the 160-acre limit set by the 1920 law was only irregularly enforced, farms of immense size were created, and water subsidies have gone to landholders that include railroads, oil companies, canning companies and multinational corporations.”

So American farms, too, are “socialized”—but by monopoly capital, which decides how much the worker will pay for his hamburger and his head of lettuce. Family farms are all but gone, and monopoly has its Eye on every stalk of wheat that’s grown and calculates it in its recondite books as profit or loss. God with his Eye on the sparrow is a piker compared to monopoly with its Eye on profit!

So who wants to hear about socialist farms? What the bourgeois correspondents want to hear is that socialist farms don’t work, so that their reports of failure will gladden the hearts of those who control the “agribusiness empires.”

NOVOSIBIRSK, SIBERIA



Downtown Novosibirsk, with a view of the Opera House



Memorial to those who fought for Soviet power in Siberia
Victory Day, May 9, thousands commemorate Siberians who fell in
the War of 1941-1945 against nazi Germany



Sovetskaya Sibir Publishing House
Akademgorodok, with the computing center in the foreground



The Nuclear Physics Institute in Akademgorodok

Nevertheless, the manager, Nikolai Kuznetsov, goes on with his list of accomplishments. The farm produces yearly, he tells us, 190,000 tons of grain, but adds that the past year there had been a drought (somehow you don't think that there are droughts or much of anything but snow in Siberia). He then reminds us that the Siberian growing season is very short, about three months from seed to silo. Still, despite the drought, they managed to deliver tons of potatoes, other vegetables, meat, eggs, and so on to the State. And since the State has no mouth of its own, it distributes the food to the people through various outlets, not necessarily only to shops.

The farm, he went on, owns 54,000 cattle, 30,000 pigs, 10,000 sheep—the figures are killing the bourgeois journalists. And, he says, it also raises blood horses. Here, some ears perk up. Apparently there are horse-lovers among us. Not everything is lost.

But before we go to see the blood horses, we're told that the farm had grossed last year 4.5 million rubles of which some 1,200,000 was clear profit.

Profit in Communist Siberia? There are some simple-minded people who think that a socialist society has nothing to do with profit (apparently only with loss). But the profit comes out of the value added by labor, in this case amounting to 30 percent.

The point is, what do they do with the profit?

In America, the answer is simple. The agribusiness barons pocket it and what happens to it from there on is none of your business! If you insist on asking, they'll put you down as a Communist. But here, in faraway Siberia, there are lots of Communists. So their profits go back to the farmers.

Wages are good here. The average wage of a farm worker (in 1978, it has grown since) was 178 rubles a month. In addition, he gets bonuses for good work, and also draws from the public consumption fund. He has, if he wants, a plot of his own on which he grows whatever he likes, consumes it or sells it.

But how is one to judge what all this means? It's no real help to translate the ruble income into dollars, as the bourgeois journalists are fond of doing. For the ruble doesn't have to do

as much for the Soviet worker as the dollar has to for the American. For the American, money is everything. He literally lives or dies by it. It's how he knows who he is. What he is. Where he belongs.

It's not so with the ruble. The ruble is fluid, wages are what's called in American "spendable income." Nothing out of it *has* to be saved. One can, if one wishes, spend all his pay on things to eat or wear or enjoy—leaving only a fraction for rent and payment of utilities. No savings must be put aside to meet all the fearful contingencies in capitalist life against which one has for protection only the ever-shrinking dollar bill. People in the U.S.S.R. of course, do save—they save for big things: cars, color TV, their own apartment or home, better clothes, a piano, trips, etc.

The ruble therefore does not need to *do* as much as the dollar is called on to do. For most of Soviet life is protected by "the public consumption fund," out of which the Soviet citizen gets his schooling, health care, old-age pensions, and a multitude of other benefits—"for free." No Soviet citizen has ever to worry about having a place to live in. This right is new in history, and raises the quality of "human rights" to a level we, in America, can only dream about (which is forbidden by law to do, however, for such dreams are subversive).

But all this is tiresome to the bourgeois journalists. "What do people do in their leisure time?" one of them asked. "Don't young men and women tire of the monotonous life on the farm and yearn for the city (which, in due course, will be called in its turn also as "dull"—*P.B.*) and don't many of them go to the city?"

It's doubtful that the manager liked being told that life on his farm of which he was so proud was "monotonous". But politely he conceded that youth do tend to want to go to the city. But a program for giving youth every opportunity to grow and develop on the farm exists, he pointed out, and the farm administration goes to great lengths to train youth to become experts in agronomy by sending them to a university to study. As for social life on the farm, there are cinema, amateur art circles, choral groups, and so on. What else is it that you seem to feel they should have to keep them excited?

The bourgeois journalists didn't like the answers they got. Did they miss the local porno shops and skinflicks? Did they long to hear a G-string twang?

I had not been sympathetic to their attitude. To tell the truth, I sat there in that little schoolroom enthralled. No, I hadn't been brought up on a farm, but there was something about the whole place, its human feeling, its "old fashioned" decorations, the plain working-class faces of the people, that took me back. I knew these people. I'd grown up among them.

They were familiar to me—the hard mark of struggle, of labor, of self-sacrifice was on them. And it had—I might as well admit it—thrilled me to hear those stories of how they'd managed to lick the Siberian cold, how they'd gotten the guts to build a city, and imagine what you have to do to raise crops in a country where the growing season is so short! Enough of Jack London was still in me to feel that the spirit of the Yukon wasn't all lost yet. I sat and drank it all in—looked out of the windows, now and then, to children, wrapped up in thick fur coats, playing in the snow. There *I* was—years ago!

But the replies they'd received hadn't impressed the bourgeois journalists at all. However, when the director noted that although almost every adult on the farm had a motor bike, only about 10 new cars a year were bought by the farm workers, they came to life.

In a society which equates the ownership of a car to the utmost in the human expression of personality, this information that cars aren't choking the highways seemed to them proof of a lower civilization. It was the news they were waiting for! Their readers most certainly could "relate" to that, couldn't they? When cars had replaced teddy bears as symbols of security and status for millions of otherwise spiritually undernourished "consumers," it was important to know that places existed in the world where a lower species of humanity labored without two-car garages. Their fingers flew. Back home, when their pieces were read by Joe Jones who was losing his shirt on car payments and, soon, gas—the word would go flying around: "The Russians don't have cars like we do!"

But that wasn't all. From cars they shifted to another subject that they had been holding in reserve. Now, one of them piped

up: "If you produce so much meat here, why is there no meat in the Novosibirsk stores?"

That was a stunner.

No meat? I'd been having meat—and they had been having meat—at the hotel every day. But that wasn't a meat store. We had seen thousands of pelmeni hanging outside of thousands of windows: inside the dough nestles a nugget of meat. I had bought what on New York's Lower East Side used to be called a "knish"—now it's called a pastelli—from a woman, padded seven layers deep with clothing, who was standing on the street-corner in below-zero cold selling these meat-covered-with-dough dumplings like, well, like hot cakes.

It seemed odd to me that reporters who were royally unconcerned about the millions of old people living off dog and cat food back home (as an item in the press revealed not too long before) should be worried so about these people in faraway Novosibirsk getting their hamburger.

But, on the other hand, what they were doing should not have surprised me. That was what they were there for—to belittle as much as possible socialist accomplishments. I could see their stories shaping up—desolate countryside which young bloods longed to leave, hardly any cars, and now no meat (in the town stores). My God, who wants it?

Why should anyone bother to make the point that most meat is not sold through the stores but goes directly to institutions? Every worker in Novosibirsk ate his big middle meal in the factory restaurant at modest prices, and he most certainly got his meat!

Nevertheless, they had a point, and backing it was word from the highest authority—Brezhnev himself. In his Plenary Meeting speech of November 27, 1979 (though this was in the future, these facts already were being bruited about in the public prints), he said: "It is common knowledge that livestock breeding is a difficult branch of agriculture. However, very much is being done for it. Though direct food grain requirements have been fully met for a long time, we continue to increase the output of grains—to increase it for fodder. Thousands of new farms and complexes have been built. The herd of cattle has been very impressive also. Several years ago a special industry was estab-

lished to produce machinery for livestock breeding and for fodder production.

“The results however have not been good. For several years meat production has shown only a very slow growth. . .”

“Slow growth”—but this didn’t mean that meat production was not growing. Per capita meat consumption annually had gone from 41 kilos in 1965 to 57 kilos in 1978, not counting what farmers raised on their own plots. The daily caloric intake of the Soviet people is over 3,000 calories. This means *everybody*—not just a chosen few. And most important, prices for meat had remained unchanged since 1962, so that today (and tomorrow) as meat prices keep falling (for wages keep rising) the situation improves. In the U.S.A. prices keep rising and real wages keep slipping. (For those employed; for those unemployed—who knows, who cares?)

So the picture was not as bad as the bourgeois correspondents painted it, nor as good as the Soviets themselves wanted it to be. The important point was that the problem was openly and democratically discussed and measures adopted to solve it. In the U.S.A., how much meat is produced, what kind, where, for whom, at what price are all matters outside the province of the ordinary citizen. He’s told these questions aren’t his business. The big agrobusinesses take care of it, and what the truth of their prices and profits might be is nobody’s concern but their own. Monopoly is king.

The administrator of Chikski state farm said he didn’t know a thing about what the correspondents claimed.

And that’s where the subject was left. The bourgeois journalists were elated: now they had something to write home about (no meat and no cars!), and they would! The bourgeois correspondents had gotten what they’d come for, and some one back home would start warming up the Pulitzer prize.

I would see (somewhat to my naive surprise) how they go to work later. But before that we have an idyllic interval. We go visit the blood horses. When these noble animals were brought out to be put through their paces for us, even the bourgeois correspondents were for once silent. What is the anti-Soviet angle on blood horses? They hadn’t come prepared with one, so all they could do was stand and admire.

Meanwhile, outside the barn some teen-age boys and girls were jumping other horses. It was so cold you'd freeze your fetlock if you stood around too long. It was really wonderful, however, to see these kids. Horse racing is the sport of the kings—and the rich. But not here. Just ordinary kids, who happened to live on a farm where life is "deadly monotonous," rode high-spirited horses around the paddock and led them neatly over the jumping barriers. Their cheeks blazed, but they were proud—happy. When I was a kid I would have given half my share in hell for a chance like that!

Then, suddenly—like a page in a fairytale—a real horse-pulled sleigh appeared. Into it piled the bourgeois correspondents, one after the other, and they were taken for a trip around the barn (yes, around the barn). Wrapped against the cold with a blanket, they now lived the reality of that childhood song of long-ago, faraway:

*Over the river and through the woods
To grandmother's house we go
The horse knows the way
To carry the sleigh—*

Ah, but they had other things to do! As some enjoyed themselves, *The New York Times* journalist, a Hardy boy to the last, was not taking a ride around the barn. He had sidled off to where a worker was passing and, imitating a normal curiosity-seeker, asked him some innocent-sounding questions. Oh, the technique of the investigative journalist! It's Watergate everywhere. What was there to find out from this worker, who had never even heard of *The New York Times*, far less the *Christian Science Monitor*? Whether the director beat his wife? Or somebody had miscounted the eggs? Or when we sat down to eat dinner, as we soon would, it wasn't meat we were eating but a *New York Times* editorial?

In the end, we did sit down for dinner. Speeches were made and vodka was drunk—that clear, unspiteful drink which, taken judiciously, warms the cockles of your heart and makes the world seem good to live in, and the people in it worth lifting a toast to. And a toast to peace and mutual understanding was lifted and exchanged—even by the bourgeois journalists who stood there

in the fading Siberian light and pledged peace to the world. But if you looked closely, you saw that they had their fingers crossed behind them.

Later, when you came to read their stories, you noticed one fact they all had in common: in looking for the story that wasn't there, they missed the story that was!

SLEEPING BEAUTY AWAKES

“Let it be clearly understood that the Russian is a delightful person till he tucks in his shirt.”

Rudyard Kipling, *Life's Handicap*

But we're not through with Siberia yet. There's a visit to the Novosibirsk Academy of Sciences still to come.

At first it seems odd to find a flourishing—and when we get to know it better—a renowned academy of sciences in these cold parts. But the decision to set up an academy of sciences in Siberia—it is actually formally the Siberian Branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences—was taken over 20 years ago, for it was recognized that Siberia's problems were quite distinct and special and must be attacked on the spot by scientists in the field.

It's got about 50 research and development institutions representing all the basic trends of the natural and social sciences, which are centered in Tomsk, Irkutsk, Ulan-Ude, Yakutsk, and of course, Novosibirsk. And the Siberian Branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences today is world-famous. Scientists come here from all over the world, including the U.S.A., to lecture, study, learn and teach. This is just one of the innumerable Soviet enterprises that quietly functions year by year as an international organization where the passions of the Cold War do not enter.

But how do they get their scientists? The same way they get their tomatoes: they grow them.

Every year scientific specialists travel through large areas of Siberia and in every town and hamlet of any size they set up tests for the schoolchildren there. About 30,000 to 50,000 of them turn out to take these tests.

Three thousand of the lucky ones then graduate to a second test, a little more demanding. Of those survivors, about 1,000 are chosen to come to Novosibirsk and go through an even more discriminating screening process. Eventually about 250 to 300

(of those 30 to 50 thousand!) are chosen to come to Novosibirsk to stay. They enter a physical and mathematical boarding school attached to the Novosibirsk State University and with no worry about anything else—money, food, clothes, room—they just study science.

This Academy wasn't here some 20-odd years ago. And to understand how far the Siberians have traveled, one should read a letter written to his mother by a certain V. I. Lenin, a political deportee, who had stopped at this spot on his way to exile—Marxism was being exiled then in Russia as it is now in the U.S.A.—“The environs,” he wrote, “are astonishingly monotonous—bare, bleak steppe. No sign of life, no towns, very rarely a village. . . Snow and sky.” That was 1897.

Today this “bare bleak steppe” is Novosibirsk, a bustling, up-to-date Siberian city with a growing population. And its particular glory is its scientific academy which trains boys and girls to tackle the problem of intense cold and perma-frost, the major enemies here, turning a country to which once criminals and the politically dangerous revolutionaries were exiled into a modern country which has learned not merely how to survive but how to make a good life.

The Academy takes up such vital problems as how to develop a strain of wheat that “knew” it had hardly three months from seed to harvest—it had to hurry up to beat the frost—and how to make oil pipes that didn't shatter when the temperature fell to 40 and 50 below zero.

As Professor Mikhail Zhukov, scientific secretary of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences, explained to us: “We have only 20 days to harvest our grain. Beyond those 20 days we can lose it to the rain in August.”

And, late in May, practically in June, they have about 10 days to get the seed into the ground. And yet, despite the time squeeze and natural calamities—like droughts—Siberian harvests are almost always bountiful.

Listening to this, every pioneer cell in my body was perking up its ears: most normal people are stirred when they hear of how Man beats Nature at her worst.

But, again, not the bourgeois journalists. They dreamed of rain in August. They were not interested either when the pro-

fessor told them something about the problems connected with building the Baikal-Amur Railroad (BAM). They had to cut tunnels through innumerable mountains, leap over countless rivers and streams, fight swarms of flies that attacked any exposed skin viciously. And always there was the cold and the frost. Rails laid on perma-frost could be twisted out of all shape by the slightest temperature change. They had to figure out how to make pipes that wouldn't freeze. And always they had to keep in mind that their intrusion on centuries' undisturbed Siberia was a trauma to the environment. They had to nurture Siberia like a baby, for despite its harsh climate and features, it is also sensitive to every touch, every alien element that enters it.

He told us, too, of how the early settlers who built their homes here would wake in the morning and find that their stoves had melted through the floor of perma-frost and had tilted the walls of their huts! Their floors "settled"—several feet down under. Now, of course, all buildings stand on concrete piles.

But obviously Siberians are made of special stuff. Even though their wages are only 15 percent above "European" wages (to compensate for the rigors of life here)*, few seem anxious to leave. True, it took 70 years for this land of ice and snow beside the Ob River, crossed by the Trans-Siberian railroad, to reach a population of a million (in 1963).

But they're far beyond that now. They have a ballet company (rated third in the country, after the Bolshoi and Kirov), 18 cinemas, 142 libraries, 17 polyclinics, 500-plus kindergartens, two airports, which carry some 5,000 passengers a day, and about 2,000 foreign specialists from all over the world who come to visit the Academy every year.

Would Lenin have been surprised to see his "barren and wild steppe," this "sleeping beauty," as the early Siberian tribesmen called it, as it is today?

Not really. For even then, in 1897 he had said: "A wonderful country. With a great future."

The "sleeping beauty" had waked up. The prince who kissed her was a man in a blue shirt carrying a hammer and a sickle.

* The wage rates increase differs in the various areas of Siberia. In Western Siberia, for instance, it equals 1.15, in the southern areas of Eastern Siberia it is 1.2, and on the BAM 1.7.—*Ed.*

STONES CRY OUT

“Everything that lives,
Lives not alone, not for itself.”
William Blake, *To Thomas Butts*,
“*With Happiness stretch’d across
the Hills*”

No monument, no work of art, can be more eloquent than the tragedy itself. All over the Soviet Union there are monuments that make no attempt to match in art the dimensions of horror that the Nazis perpetrated there in deed.

And that is why so often these monuments to the dead in the war are no more than raw stone, jagged-edged, unfinished, gray and cold: grief unreconciled.

The Soviet people do not compromise with reality. They do not want to substitute in their memories for the cruel deeds of the Nazis the subtle reassurances of art. They let the raw stones speak what they may.

There are just such “monuments” at Khatyn, which is in Byelorussia, as there are in Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, even in Germany itself. I’ve seen them all. But here in Khatyn the Nazis were most methodical in their calculated policy of wiping out Byelorussian villages with the population as well.

It was not cruelty, first or even foremost. This was far worse. This cruelty was impersonal: it was policy. It was ideology. It was class murder. Genocide.

It was Hitler wiping out Lidice—every man, woman and child. It was Truman wiping out Hiroshima and Nagasaki—every man, woman, child (and American POWs). Without malice—as policy.

The aim of the Nazis—that is, German imperialism, German financiers with monocles and sabre cuts along their cheeks, with their international connections, sitting on the same boards of international finance along with their “enemies”—was to eliminate physically as many Byelorussians as was necessary to subdue

them in order to clear the territory for German settlers. Lebensraum—living space for Germans—meant death for Byelorussians, 2,225,000 of them, one in four—someone, if you survived, from your own family, or the family next door. With a face, hopes and desires, and a name. Now inscribed in stone.

No mind is capable of taking in, of absorbing personally, as a personal emotion, the enormity of the crime. In fact, if the "crime" is understood only as "crime," as cruelty, as "man's inhumanity to man," then eventually the mind refuses to accept it at all, wilts under the burden of it, turns away, sickened by figures which no longer are calculable by human arithmetic.

What is diabolical here is that because the crime perpetrated by the Nazis is so extreme, so inhuman, it paradoxically escapes human judgment—becomes a question not of individuals but of humanity itself.

And yet one should be warned—every abstract figure of figures that mount into the millions had nevertheless its personal, intimate reality. *Somebody* died. *Somebody*—some one body—was killed. It had that name, it felt, cried, it died. Class cruelty aims to reduce all humans to anonymity even in their grief. Yet for every figure there was a scream of agony. If we could hear them all together we would go deaf for the rest of our lives.

Because these murders escape all previous categories of human judgment, they are, in a way, historically efficient: useless to look for criminals alone; the whole class is criminal: this is what they teach us.

The villages that once stood here, in Khatyn, remain here still but as ghosts of their former selves, stubs of homes on charred foundations. From each such foundation rises a chimney—a bleak chimney—at whose summit an iron bell tolls discordantly. They have built a concrete wall, which reproduces the walls of concentration camps, and at intervals gaps in the wall are blocked by a sinister grille, and each one bears the name of a death camp and the numbers of its victims. These numbers mount into the tens of thousands. You think as you read them that some of these people are as old, mostly younger, than you are now. They could be there standing beside you.

The Nazis rounded up villagers into barns and set them on fire. Not just here. It was done also in Lithuania, at Pirčipe

there; also in the Ukraine. If they had gotten to Kansas, they would have done it in Kansas too. They drove people into graves they had forced them to dig. They killed by plan and proved to the world that it's possible to destroy everybody if you go about it mathematically and according to policy.

On one wall, cut in its own stone, there is a message, which has been often quoted, and I will quote it, too, for it is a message of the dead—they have sent it to us: "You of goodwill, remember we, too, loved life. We loved our country and you, dear people. We were consumed by the flames of death. We appeal to you: may your sorrow and grief turn into courage and strength, so that peace forever may be established on the earth. May life never again be devoured in fire and death."

And nearby there is cut in stone that bleeds inwardly an answer:

"Our dear dead, we are standing here before you in grief, our heads bent. You did not submit to the rabid murderers during those hard days of Nazi slavery. Yes, you died. But the flames of your love for our Soviet Motherland still live on forever. Your memory is as eternal as our Earth and the bright sun over it."

Anyone who wants to understand Soviet patriotism, the people's infinite identification with their country, and their contempt for those who betray it, must remember that hardly a Soviet citizen exists who has not lost someone in that war. Over 35 years later the pain is alive still. Children who were born long after the cities were rebuilt have inherited nevertheless that blood identity. No one feels ambiguous about it: socialism is sealed in blood into the very bones of the people. It was a just war of defense and survival. It cost dearly. But those who survived repossessed their country in the profoundest possible way—through the sacrifice of their sons and daughters.

They have also not forgotten that it was not a "mad man", not just a Hitler, who started the war. It was German imperialism that needed it—an imperialism, in fascist boots, sent Eastward by bourgeois, mainly French and English schemers (with American connivance), who hoped Hitler would take care of their problem in the East—which is why he is put down by some historians today not because he was the arch-murderer of the world (was Truman so far behind with his two bombs over

Japan and Johnson with his Mylais in Vietnam and Nixon "carpet-bombing" inoffensive Cambodia?) but because he failed. The job he failed to do was left to NATO. Speaking from the dock at Nuremberg, Alfred Rosenberg, chief of the foreign policy department and official "ideologist" of Hitler's Nazi party, minister of the occupied eastern territories, spoke not of his crimes nor of remorse; he told his Western judges that what they, the Nazis had failed to do, *they*, the West, would have to do!

At Brest, which stands on the Soviet border next to Poland and had been occupied by the Nazis, Soviet soldiers, defending the city's fortress, fought stubbornly, while the onrushing Wehrmacht moved east—Hitler had planned to be within Moscow in six weeks and the U.S.A.'s General Marshall, looking at the situation from all angles, agreed that he would be—they fought alone, they fought until they almost all died, unaware of how the war was going (were they winning or losing?) but never considering surrender. This early stubborn defense should have warned the Nazis. The fortress in which these Soviet soldiers died is now a monument: you stand there and try to summon up memories of war against a sky of peace, but you cannot. Peace is normal.

The most you can do for their memory is to learn how to keep alive—how to recognize in the military today, in the Southern accents of a peanut farmer or in the Western twang of one of his generals, or of a Presidential adviser with a European slur in his English, the authentic inherited accents of that earlier militarism that sowed the soil of Europe with corpses and won for itself nothing but death and the eternal contempt of mankind.

One travels through a foreign land, visits the relics of foreign dead, hears faintly the echoes of a monumental grief and feels that he will be swept under by the very weight of it all unless he understands, not just that it happened, and that it was monstrous, but why; not that some individuals perpetrated crimes untold and that they were horrible but why those individuals existed and had the power to do so, and why they needed to do so. It's not enough to know that it happened in the past, and to condemn the past. What is important to know is what that power was that tried to destroy the past, how and why it lives

now, and threatens to destroy the present along with the future in a voracious last act of historic self- and other- destruction.

Militarism today has an American accent. The logic by which the fallen standards of the Nazis were picked up by American imperialism is not to be found in an abstract evil inherent in mankind. It is a very concrete evil. It has roots that can be dug up. They can be brought into the light. They can be understood by absolutely anybody who wants to.

My visit to Byelorussia, which included trips to a carpet factory, an auto plant, a science laboratory where they experimented with laser beams, a collective farm and to private homes, left one overwhelming impression on me: we still have time.

Not only time but also the means for defending—protecting ourselves. Nothing is mysterious, neither why the Nazis killed nor why the Americans arm.

And, unpleasant though it was, no American who travels through these desolated stubs of villages can separate those scenes from the newer scenes created by Americans in Vietnam and North Korea. Wherever we went in Byelorussia we kept coming home to Mylai.

But faced though they were with extinction, at no time did the Byelorussians give up. They ran into the woods and swamps by the thousands. And from there they fought back by day and night, and they drove the Nazis out of their land, as the Soviet Army came westward, and chased them to Berlin, and ended Nazism where it began.

They tell you of the past, the terrible past. But after a decent interval, from those aching memories of the past they direct your eyes to the present, and even more eagerly, to the future.

Nowhere in the world does a people live more positively in the future than in the socialist world—these people who lived so badly in the past. They speak intimately of the future, as though they've been there already and have come back to tell you jubilantly what it is like.

For them it's everything. They see it concretely in their maps and blueprints, in their children's eyes—children they count like precious jewels, there once were so few of them—in their schools going up everywhere, the new cities that appear as if overnight, always filled with blocks of gleaming apartment buildings, creat-

ing magnificent silhouettes against the bare sky, and still they tell you that tomorrow there will be more and more—and more.

And they show you how and why by numbers and computers and blueprints that finally blur in your mind into some huge master plan of tomorrow that keeps growing as you watch it, like some phenomenon in a science-fiction movie.

The usual run-of-the-mill science fictionist's inventions however seem meagre and uninspired beside this coming reality nested in these people's plans.

I asked a Byelorussian what single idea would characterize his republic. He said: "War." War had destroyed them, and it is out of the ashes of war that they recreated themselves. The memory of war remains with them in their daily lives.

War for them is personal—they know it intimately in all its harshness and grotesqueness. They have seen landscapes they never want to see again—in art or reality. For years they could not bear to remember the war in film or novel. They hate war. But more than that, unlike those anonymous millions who died in the sad, lonely deaths of other people's wars to which they had come, deceived or driven, they know where war comes from, who is guilty, and how to stop them. And that makes all the difference.

BYELORUSSIA



Victory Square in Minsk



The Kholmisky Gate in Brest, "the hero fortress"



Lenin Street in Minsk on the day the city was liberated from the nazis in July 1944





Leninsky Prospekt in Minsk today



Memorial to the defenders of Brest Fortress



Angelina Davydova, wife of Lieutenant Pyotr Davydov who died a hero's death during the defense of Brest Fortress



"The Unvanquished", sculpture at Khatyn

The bells of Khatyn toll day and night

In Byelorussia the Nazis burned 186 villages together With
the villagers

"WE DON'T WANT TO BE LIKE THEM!"

"There's small choice in rotten apples."
Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew*

Minsk. In the end no country has any secrets. What the poets tell you of their land, the revelations of novelists, the moods of painters and the songs of musicians tell us almost everything we need to know about a country, and no safe with a diabolical system of electrically controlled locks can keep such secrets out of our hands.

But even more profoundly revealing of what a country is really like—what its people really are—is the way in which they fight for what they believe. Two great wars have put the Soviet people through a crucible that has shaped them in such a special way that they emerge upon the world scene as a moral force of such historic proportions that peoples everywhere feel it and in some way respond to it, not because they are militarily strong but because, as a people, their ideas have been proven invincible.

They have set a standard of devotion, courage and self-sacrifice for all the world. The ideas which once existed only on paper as written by Marx, Engels and Lenin are now part of the flesh and blood of millions, and in their support of those ideas, the Soviet people have proved not merely that they believe in them, but that they are true.

Among modern great nations, the Soviet Union is the only one that can say justly that it built its power, created its great wealth, out of the sweat and blood of its own people. No Blacks—no Africans driven by the whip—toiled for them. No Orientals, no Indians were robbed of their lives so that Russians could live better. Before history, therefore, their conscience is clear. Volgo-grad was not constructed from super-profits taken out of the

backs of colonials—as every great city in Europe and America has been. It was constructed out of the sweat and blood of its own people.

So, too, its other great cities, particularly the ones built since the war.

But even more impressive and inspiring than the great cities that have been built since the war has been the fact that, with almost as much painful effort and sacrifice, a whole new people has also been built.

Tens of thousands of children grew up orphans after the war. They had seen sights no child should ever see. One-third of the country was devastated. Thousands of children were driven into Germany—many never to return. Others saw their mothers ravaged, their fathers hanged. They themselves lived on roots and berries. And in cities like Leningrad, among those who were not lucky enough to be evacuated in time, many died of starvation. And in cities behind the Urals children took the places at the machines of fathers and brothers at the front.

And when the enemy was at last driven back to the bunkers of Berlin and there exterminated (except for those who escaped to America), those children who survived, returning to villages that no longer existed, searching for relatives lost in some anonymous death, or hunting for brothers and sisters that they had last seen through the flames and smoke of burning towns, these survivors might even have wondered whether it was a mercy to have survived, for they had won back a vast graveyard.

Take, for example, the problem of orphaned kids. The number of children left without one or both parents amounted to millions throughout the Soviet Union. It was a repetition of the situation after the civil war and foreign military intervention, when thousands upon thousands of *bezprizorniks* roamed the country begging, stealing, living off whatever the starving country still possessed. The epic story of how these children were rescued and reincorporated into Soviet life has been eloquently told by S. A. Makarenko in his books and again unforgettably in the film, *Road to Life*. Many later leaders of the country began as orphaned children roaming the devastated country.

The problem returned after World War II. This time there

were more orphaned children. And this time there was an added problem, an ideological problem. For the Nazis brought not only physical devastation but moral corruption as well.

But this time provisions for taking care of these children had been made even before the war itself had ended, and even during the war, Soviet families were already caring for the first orphaned.

But why did it happen that with so many millions of its children deprived of parents, who had witnessed and experienced human savagery, in fact a special depravity beyond all historical precedent, the Soviet Union was not subjected to masses of juvenile delinquents, addicted to drugs, forming gangs of thieves, with violence the norm of everyday life?

But though part of the Soviet Union was subjected to the occupation of Nazis who not only spread death but moral disease, who consciously set out to corrupt the people with corrupt ideas—why was it that the problems with youth never became overwhelming ones, and most important, the vices learned from the Nazis then were not institutionalized to become a permanent feature of social life?

No greater test of the durability of a society could have been devised. What the Soviet Union was confronted with, after the war, was as crucial to its existence as what it faced during the war. Did socialism possess within itself the all-healing powers that could bring these wounded birds back to health again? If the Soviet Union today were infested with young gangs, prostitution rings, drug addiction of children starting in the schoolyard, robbery as a normal fact of life, and murder by teen-agers already an incorporated feature of life, shocking and deplorable as that would be, still one could say: it was the war.

But no. This happened not in the Soviet Union which lost 20 million of its citizens, among them some seven million young men in their prime and hundreds of thousands of children, but in the United States which did not lose even a fraction of that in all its wars (though it's getting there) and, more important, did not fight the war in its backyard, on its doorstep, in its kitchen.

True, again, there were more wars for Americans to follow. But these, too—in Korea and Vietnam—were fought far from

home. The children who were killed were Korean and Vietnamese children, not American—not directly.

But by a certain ironic, if bitter, justice it has turned out that American children did not get away scot free either. Today millions of them are authentic victims of barbarism as though, from a war which took place somewhere, unseen, against a people about whom one need have no feelings, yet they had nevertheless eaten its poisoned fruit. They are wounded and the society does not possess within itself the power to heal them.

Never could one come across an item like the following no matter where one traveled in the U.S.S.R., nor how many criminals one might meet:

“Cleveland, February 23 (AP) (1979)—Two teen-agers paid a 19-year-old man \$60 to kill their father, police have charged. . .

“Two of Mr. (John) White’s children, John, 17 and Michelle, 14, were charged Wednesday with delinquency by reason of aggravated murder and robbery. Police said they had taken from their father the \$60 that they allegedly used to pay Mr. Watkins (the murderer).

“Mr. White was killed with a .38 calibre pistol when he returned home from work on February 9. Police say the children put his body in a back room of their house and used his \$240 paycheck and credit cards for a \$2,000 shopping spree.

“...Police said the children wanted their divorced father dead because he was too strict. Detectives quoted one of the children as saying: ‘He wouldn’t let us do anything we wanted, like smoke pot.’”

The accompanying picture shows a loving, affectionate family portrait—father in the center with his smiling daughter on one side and his All-American son on the other. You could put them on a poster.

I happened to meet an auto worker in Minsk who gave me an answer to the question I raised above: why didn’t Soviet children become thieves and delinquents after the war, and if

some of them did become thieves and delinquents, why did they change?

He had been one of those orphaned children. His name is Gennadi Tarasik. He was only five years old when the war broke out. His father was immediately executed by the Nazis. His other relatives also met their death at the hands of the invaders.

He had two younger brothers and a sister. And on him fell the main burden of caring for them, which meant helping to keep them alive. His mother worked on a nearby farm—what the farm raised went to the Nazis. They, on the other hand, ate potato peels, roots, the scraps their mother could steal from the farm, which the Nazis didn't want anyhow. (Later, in retreat, the Nazis would slaughter or drive off all the cattle and pigs to Germany.)

There was no law in the land. The "law" of the Nazis was pillage, robbery and rape: the obscenity of the "master race." Some Soviet citizens there were—and there always are—who saw in the temporary military defeat of the Soviets the defeat of socialism itself—forever. They adjusted to the conquerors, and in a grotesque way, learned how to live and even prosper in hell: these ran to West Germany (and to America) when the war came back to them.

They had helped spread the miasma of fear and doubt and by personal example showed how it was possible, their way, to survive. And to them that was all that mattered.

Hearing all this, I asked Gennadi why he, a hungry and lonely boy, hadn't become a thief?

Even after the war, food deliveries did not immediately resume. Times were hard and stayed hard. Why then hadn't he stolen? Some had. Some boys went wrong—they wanted to eat and sold whatever they had to sell, their humanity. But why hadn't he?

His first replies were non-committal. He really didn't want to go into it. There was, after all, pain there—memories that had all but healed. Why re-open them?

But I insisted. I wanted to know why, not only as a journalist, but for my own private sake perhaps even more. Why? I prodded him.

Then he burst out: "We lived through the whole war! All of

us suffered. My father was killed. On my mother's side four were killed! Our dream as boys was this: if we ever survived, we said to ourselves that we would pay life back by spreading happiness—"

"Spreading what?"

"*Happiness!*" he said fiercely. "Happiness wherever we went! We had seen so much of sorrow and misery. And this promise to ourselves kept most of us youngsters, though we were all on the brink of starvation, from stealing anything. You want to know why! We'd seen the Nazis steal. We didn't want to be like them!"

"We didn't want to be like them!" That was the difference—nobody wanted to be like the fascists! Even children. That was the lesson the Nazis had driven home to a whole generation of Soviet people by example. The ideas of racism, the assumed superiority of one people over another, the notion that people can be bought and sold, openly in the slave markets of the world, covertly through the Stock Markets of the world, that the will of one can be imposed on others, that the drive for profits is supreme in life—and that all other qualities kneel down before this one—these ideas, which are having a new life today, were payed out in the blood and death of millions of Soviets who cannot misunderstand their lesson. For a Robin Knight—or anyone else—to claim that the Soviets are racists, when they saw bloody racism in close-up, and when so many died at the hands of racists, is an obscenity beyond obscenity.

That the Nazis taught Soviet children their very salvation as human beings depended on morally rejecting every influence that came from the fascists is a bitterly-won lesson. But it has its creative side. For it was that very hatred of all ideas associated with Nazism that spurred on the greatest upsurge of rebuilding—as Brezhnev has described in his book, *Rebirth*—the world has ever seen. The momentum begun right after the war continues to this day.

The Nazis confirmed for millions of people that there is a connection between ideas and life. First they appear as ideas only in a book—let's call it *Mein Kampf*—and then those ideas appear in tanks spitting death. They burn down your house—those ideas do—and hang your children!

The Nazis taught the Soviets again that those monstrous social relations that are covered over in civilian life—employer to worker, racist to his victim—come openly out in times of crisis and, the man who only wants his normal rent from you in New York City, which he will accept on a piece of paper coming to him in the mail, will reappear with a tank pouring death on your head in time of crisis when those social relations are challenged!

Americans are far from knowing this with the same searing intensity that the Soviet people know it. Nor can they understand as well as the Soviets can that you do not play politics with the idea of peace. Peace, this supreme need of humanity, reigns over everything in Soviet life, and not for pacifist, passive reasons. But for the sake of human creativity itself.

No matter where you go—whether it's to Novosibirsk in far-off Siberia, or Riga in Latvia thousands of miles from Siberia, or to Minsk, or Moscow, Vilnius or Kiev, or Baku, or Alma Ata—*wherever* you go, in this vast land which covers one-sixth of the earth's surface, you find a unanimity on this question that wells out of the very soul of the people.

They think of peace as not just the absence of war. But in an active way—as providing a context in which the great promise of a future for truly freed humanity may come true. They have no military-industrial complex that lives parasitically off war and war preparations, which coins the fears of humanity into profits, on the assumption that though the world may perish the Stock Market will live forever. They see as absurd, as incredibly insane, the piling up of profits in banks all over the world as “payment” for those tanks and iron and steel which have no destiny other than to create massive death—or end up on the junk pile. No tank ever built a school or a hospital. It has only destroyed them.

No visitor to the Soviet Union, no matter how long he lives there, nor how deeply he probes into the “hidden” character of the people, nor however motivated by the drive to uncover the seamy side of life, in some caricature of “investigative reporting,” can ever hope to uncover a secret desire—let alone an actual plan—to go to war against anyone. Everything in the U.S.S.R. cries out against such an idea. Sincerity radiates from every person one meets. Not only in words. This truthfulness about

their social aims is visible in every brick that the builders put, one on the other, to raise a new house, in every celebration of the opening of a new school, or hospital, or summer camp.

It rushes out of the throbbing atmosphere of creativity that envelopes the entire country from border to border and seems to be the oxygen which flushes their cheeks.

"Look!" Tarasik said to me. "I am only 48 years old, and look at my hair!" It was gray!

He had not come unscathed out of the past. But the future? Aside from war and peace, what worries him? He thinks for a moment.

"I'm worried about my daughter. I don't think she studies hard enough. She likes fun too much."

“WHAT IS A DISSIDENT?”

“Now step I forth to whip hypocrisy.”

Shakespeare, *Love's Labour Lost*

†

Bright Way Collective Farm, Byelorussia.

Literally millions of dollars are spent every year by the U.S.A. (\$481 million in 1979 alone to run the various American radios beamed to the U.S.S.R.) to convince these two people—Anatoli and Tamara Soroko—I went to visit today—that they're unhappy, oppressed, and that their friends the “dissidents” are always thinking of them.

Was this money well-spent from the American taxpayer's point of view?

Let's see.

There's little that's particularly striking about them from a casual point of view. Anatoli is 30 and drives a truck. His wife, Tamara, is 28 and teaches mathematics to the collective farm children. They have four-year-old twins.

Not too unusual so far. But what's really unusual about them is that the whole capitalist world is thinking about their welfare day and night. Worried about them. Telling them—in radio program after radio program in Russian, to make it easier for them to understand—that they're miserable, that they ought to revolt, that they should put on ballet slippers and pirouette and pas de deux to the border, and so on.

So I went to see why they didn't.

First of all, they live in a collective farm, and they've just built their house. It's six rooms—I wish I had six rooms—it has a garden, where they keep some chickens and a pig, the rooms are spacious, and in America, this house would sell for (who knows with galloping inflation?) say, \$100,000. But between them they make no more than 280 rubles a month, and you can see,

if you translate that into dollars, they have no American right to a \$100,000 house.

But since they don't live in America, they have it anyhow.

"How did they get it? They got a loan from the collective farm, which was their down payment, and now they pay as they earn, and this house will be theirs for keeps in about 10 years. They can sell it, if they want, at what it cost them, or will it to their heirs.

But if you look down the street of this village you'll see dozens of houses just like this one, and the people in them aren't any richer.

But they live as though they're rich.

First of all, the collective farm built it for them, or they pitched in to build as well. They moved in and they live quite, quite well.

Now, here's where we enter Crazy House.

I sit in their parlor and drink a little, taste the *kolbasa* they made out of last year's pig (they have a smokehouse in the rear), and ask them what's their heart's desire?

They think. "To have?"

"To have."

"A car."

"And that's it?"

They can't think of anything else.

Then I ask the mother one of my Simple Simon questions.

"You have twins. Where are they now?"

"At the creche—the kindergarten."

"That's because both of you work—you as a teacher, your husband as a truck driver. Where is the creche?"

"Just up the street. I drop in and look at them."

"Fine. Now, do they ever get sick?"

"Sometimes."

"What do you do?"

"What do I do?" She looks at me in surprise and turns to her husband to see if he heard me also. "Why I call for the doctor."

"And he comes?"

"But of course!"

"And he helps your twins?"

"Yes."

"And what do you pay him?"

"What do you mean, what do I pay him?"

She looks at me uncertainly.

"I mean, what do you *pay* him? He served you. You pay him. That's the way it is."

"I pay him nothing. Oh, maybe. I'll give him a box of candy—or flowers. But I pay him nothing!"

"Nothing? No money?"

"Of course not!"

"And you think that's normal?"

"Of course it's normal!"

Of course, it *isn't* normal! It just isn't normal in most parts of the world to call a doctor, get his services and give him nothing more than a thank-you. No, that is *not* normal.

"Do you think free medical care is a human right?"

Neither she nor he understood what I meant.

"I *mean*: do you think that people have a *right* to free medical care just because they're people?"

They know no other way.

"All right," I said. "I want to ask you to do something for me. Suppose your two children got sick and you had to find a doctor immediately but didn't have the money to pay him. What would you do?"

I looked at the man. He looked blankly back at me. I looked at the woman.

"But we don't pay him."

"I know. But suppose—just suppose—it was different—and you *had* to pay but didn't have the money. What would you do?"

She smiled helplessly at me and shook her head.

"Just try," I pleaded. "Try very hard to imagine a situation in which your two kids are sick—or have been hurt—and you need a doctor but you can't afford one."

"But that's barbaric!" she burst out.

"Is it? But in civilized America this is the case for millions of people. But here you think it's barbaric. What's Radio Liberty going to do with that?"

Well, so there it was: in faraway Byelorussia I met two people who thought that life in America was "barbaric." They couldn't even—by a supreme effort of the imagination—put themselves

into that place where millions of Americans have been since they were born.

Sadly I said to Anatoli: "Do you feel that the so-called dissidents are expressing any dissatisfaction in your life?"

"What," Anatoli asked, "is a dissident?"

For a moment I thought I hadn't heard him. "What did you say?"

"What is a dissident?"

"You don't know what a dissident is?"

He shrugged. "You mean to tell me that after spending millions of dollars to teach you at least that one word, America still hasn't taught you what a dissident is?"

I broke into laughter. This I hadn't expected. Denunciations, scorn—but not this—total ignorance. I went on to something else. "Are you a Communist?" Yes, he was—nothing remarkable in that. Not here. Gus Hall in the U.S.A. had been sent to Leavenworth for eight years for answering that question. But here—no, it was nothing in particular to answer it. After all, there were more than 17 million others who would answer it the same way.

Did he feel, I asked, as though I were reading a *New York Times* editorial at him, that the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. was dictatorial, unrepresentative, oppressed the people, kept the good things to itself, the jobs, the housing, and so on. In short, did he miss the freedom of voting either Democrat or Republican?

Finally, it struck me that I'd walked into what can only be described as a hilariously funny situation. No matter what I said—no matter how I tried to bring that other world into line with this one, I could find no place to couple it. Whatever I said would come out funny.

This truck driver, whose library I looked into, reads Tolstoy, Chekhov, Victor Hugo, Sholokhov, and so does his wife. By all cliché precedents he shouldn't be reading, or even know the name of, Tolstoy, but some shoot-'em-up murder mystery with a blowsy de-robed blonde overflowing her frontal recommendations on the glossy cover.

You walk through the looking-glass from an insane world into a world that is sane, where the responses are normal and the people love their children, and so conditioned are you—even you—by that other world you had left behind that for a moment

you can't recognize this world and expect it at any instant to assume those familiar hysterical features that had kept your nerve ends raw for so many years. But no. It doesn't happen. You meet two people in a place called "Bright Way Collective Farm"—a name that would send every word-mauler on Madison Avenue screaming for the exits!—who give you sane answers to your insane questions, and, for a moment, you're not certain whether you're coming, or whether—without checking—you're going.

You get up to leave. There's a respectful silence. They are still a bit gun-shy. After all, who had ever asked them such questions? At the door, seeing that I had nothing more to ask, Anatoli sighed and his face brightened up. "Look," he said, as if this was all that had been on his mind—much more important than anything else we'd discussed—"come back in the Fall, and we'll go out fishing and picking mushrooms. There are wonderful fish here."

And no dissidents.

"DISSENTERS" TO PEACE

"What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,
That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourself scabs?"

Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*

In the summer of 1978 a trial was to take place in Moscow. The trial was of a man whose name was Anatoli Scharansky. Nobody in the Soviet Union knew who he was. But his name was well known to Zionism and in the offices of the American CIA. He was also well known to some American correspondents in Moscow whom he supplied with "information" about Soviet life intended to give Senators and Representatives back home the "evidence" they needed for heating up the ashes of the Cold War.

The tales that the Soviet Union "persecuted" and refused to allow Jews to emigrate, which had saturated the American media for years, had been the pretext that Senator Jackson needed to bully through Congress a law which crippled American-Soviet trade.

So these stories sent by correspondents quoting "dissidents" were not just blowing in the wind! They had practical results. They were not just exercises in free speech. They were "paper bullets" intended to be followed by lead bullets.

Similar stories were used by opponents to SALT-2, to cultural and scientific exchanges, by the enemies of detente. This was what might be called the "moral opening." The Soviet Union was pictured as "immoral"; that it did not protect "human rights," and so on.

All that could have been, and in the past was, shrugged off. As they say in the U.S.S.R.: "The dogs bark but the caravan moves on." But this time it wasn't quite like that. The dogs not only barked, they went for one's throat! The campaign against the Soviet Union on the issue of "human rights," which reached

a crescendo in 1978, particularly around the Scharansky case, almost imperceptibly merged into a new stage—of charging that the Soviet Union was a “military threat.”

There was no substance whatsoever to any of these charges. But in hardly more than a year, America—moving quickly from synthetic indignation over the absence of “human rights” in the Soviet Union—had managed to make Western Europe a huge arsenal of atomic weapons, which she alone controlled! By the time the Afghanistan “issue” rolled along, everything was in place. All that was needed then was to push the hysteria button down as far as it would go and create such a din by every electrical means at hand that one’s mind literally couldn’t think straight from the sheer volume of noise and the weight of propaganda bearing down on it!

People who looked patronizingly back to the days of our parents and grandparents wondering how their old folks could ever have been so naive as to let themselves be led to the slaughter of World War I by such cock-and-bull stories like George Creel’s tale of Belgian baby hands cut off by the Huns—*believed* Carter’s cock-and-bull story about Soviet intentions in Afghanistan (and the world) as though past experience to them was nothing at all—just shadows from yesterday with no connection to today. They couldn’t *see* the connection. They couldn’t *see* that each generation is fooled by the contemporary illusions it lives by. But the continuing thread between yesterday and today is that the interests of imperialism are *always* opposed to the interests of the people. The lyrics change but the music remains the same.

What part in this sinister melodrama did Scharansky and the “dissidents” play? Were they just innocent civil libertarians pinning for the Russians to win the right to vote Republican or Democrat? Were they, for instance, not counter-revolutionaries, as charged, but actually pure-hearted, even “socialists,” interested only in wiping the face of socialism clean of all that marred its beauty, and that done, would happily settle down and raise chickens?

What role did the Moscow correspondents play in this game? Were they mere onlookers on a scene in which their stake was simply to get their story?

Arriving by bits and pieces, as time and events wore on, the

elements that finally arranged themselves into a portrait of a typical Soviet "dissenter" began to form on a world scene, and to the surprise, not to say the chagrin, of American liberals, there was something disturbingly awry with what they saw. Solzhenitsin was one of the first to sit for his world portrait. And it came out all wrong.

A "dissident," by liberal myth, as the lone, individual David challenging the might of the Goliath state, should be, first of all, a democrat. But Solzhenitsin was not a democrat. He believed in Czarism! He wanted the Russia of the Black Hundreds, of darkness and ignorance, of the landowners' knout, of the church—he *hated* democracy, and wanted none of it, and said so in no uncertain terms. If it was up to him, all American liberals would be thrown into jail!

This shocked liberal opinion in America which demands, if nothing else, a dressing of liberal schmaltz from its heroes. Solzhenitsin would shock them even more as he went along, so that even Carter had to send out his wife, an unlikely Horatio, to hold the bridge against this man, who, like a cannon that had broken loose, was wrecking everything "liberal and democratic" that stood in his way. He wanted war, the quicker, bigger and more devastating the better!

They drew the blind down on this portrait.

How about others less noted? Here we quote an expert (Andre Amalrik):

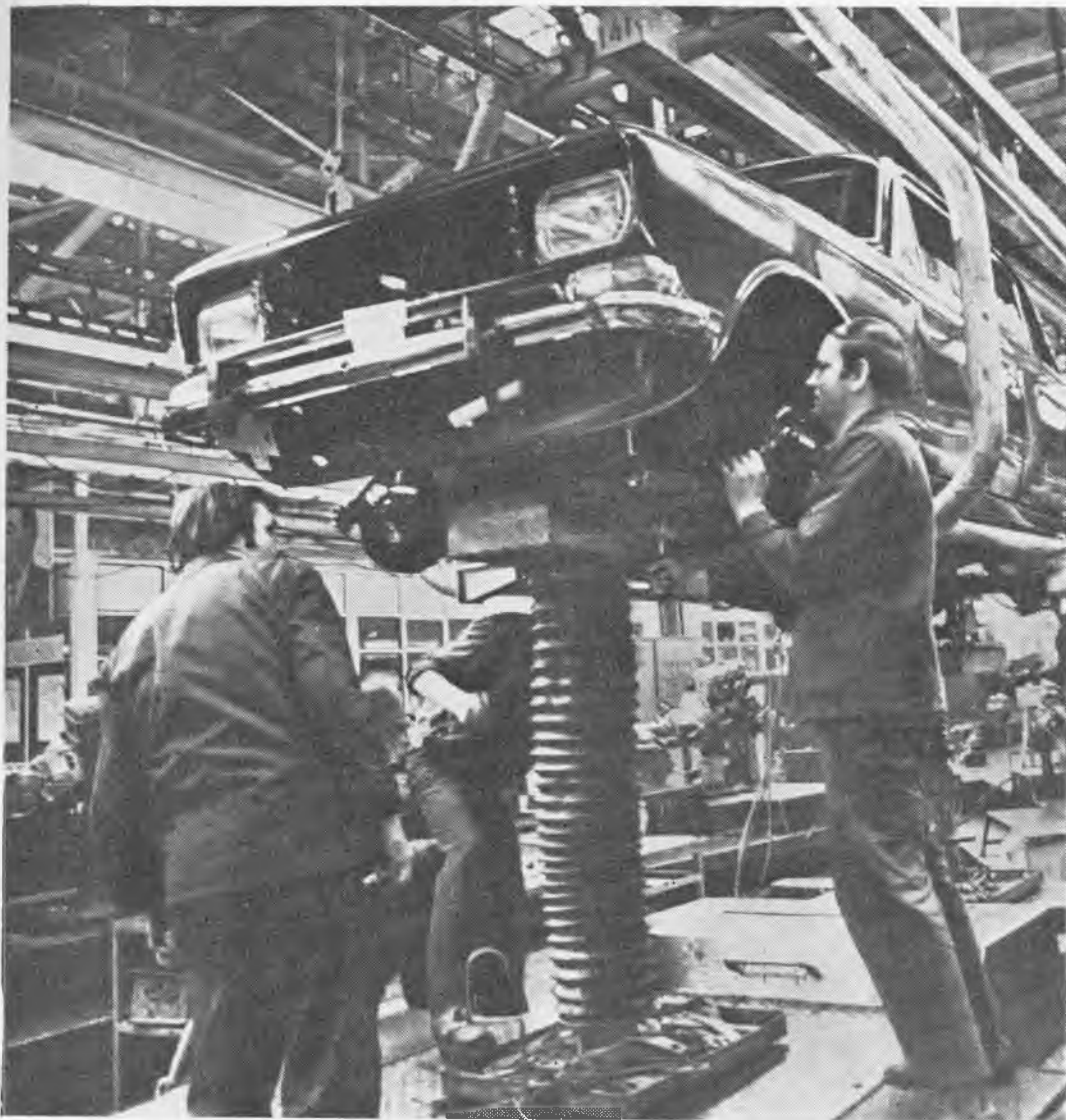
"However, in connection with partial authorization for emigration there have appeared many 'last-day dissidents' who became dissidents for a short period from the time they requested an exit visa until they received it, and used their 'dissidence' either to expedite their departure or to make a name for themselves in the West. . ." (*New York Times*, October 18, 1977.)

Two such "dissidents," through the invariably hospitable columns of *The New York Times*, mourned: "Dissidence in Russia is living out its short life-span. This has already become obvious. No matter how sad it may be, it is better to admit it forthrightly. . ."

"The Russian dissidents are just as remote from their own people as is the party-bureaucratic clique. This is a tragic situation. The argument about Russia is being carried on by the sides

A LENIN SUBBOTNIK

Millions of people across the country volunteer their labor at
Lenin Subbotniks. . .



Central conveyer at the Lenin Komsomol Car Works in Moscow

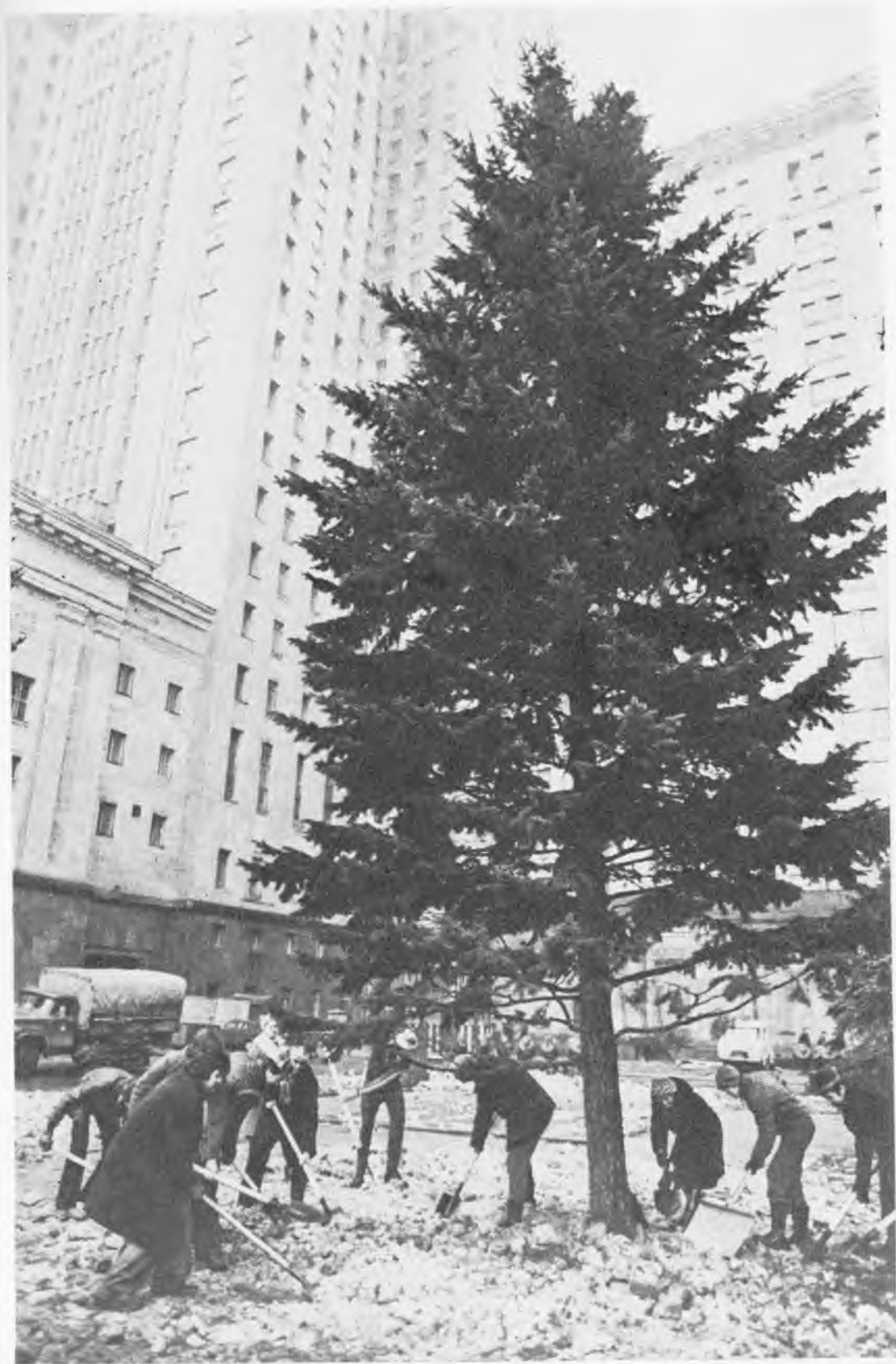


Assembly plant
at the Second
Moscow Watch Factory



Second Moscow Watch
Factory worker

Students of Moscow University
tidying up the campus
during
a Lenin Subbotnik





U.S.S.R. Cardiological Center is going up in Moscow on funds donated by Lenin Subbotniks

as if in a vacuum, outside the country, not inside it." (*New York Times*, October 4, 1977.) (The "party-bureaucratic clique" is Trotskyite pique.)

"Dissidents," mourned David K. Shipler, who ought to know, having been more than a brother to them, "who take heavy risks in struggling for human rights, and who count on publicity and support in the West, rarely turn out to be civil libertarians. . ." (*New York Times*, in *International Herald Tribune*, June 16-17, 1979.) How someone "struggling for human rights" can fail to be a "civil libertarian" Shipler does not stop to inquire into, possibly because "struggling for human rights" in the Soviet Union is no different than Hitler "struggling" in his day for his "rights." Not all who struggle for rights struggle for *human* rights!

This discordant note of disappointment and confusion would be sounded over and over. Why weren't Soviet "dissidents" nice people? Why, in fact, when they came to America, did they turn out to be more Catholic than the Pope, more reactionary than Goldwater? The answer was simple, but simple answers were not what they wanted.

Stephen S. Rosenfeld, in a half-and-half *mea culpa* article in August 1978, let part of the cat out of the bag. He had been expelled himself from the Soviet Union for being overzealous—as he saw it—in "charging around" that country "hunting down the news." Dissidents? "Yes, they (Western correspondents—*P.B.*) have a right to tell the story of the dissidents, but maybe the Soviet authorities have reason to complain that the U.S. press corps had been flogging the story too hard." (*International Herald Tribune*, August 14, 1978.)

Flogging only? It seems they did more than that. After Craig Whitney and Harold Piper had been charged with forgery, and convicted in court, "there is a formal rallying around but an informal questioning of the press for making too much of the dissidents, for passing over from the role of witness to participant, for becoming part of the problem of the deterioration of Soviet-U.S. ties." (*Ibid.*)

An extraordinary admission, that! In fact, it tacitly concedes that the two indicted journalists were guilty as charged, and then goes on to confirm another charge which is equally serious,

and that is, that American journalists in the Soviet Union are not just "reporters" who are there merely to observe, but are *activists*—they *provoke* clashes and incidents; they are *partisans*. Once having provoked the situation, then they "objectively" report it!

This, of course, is illegal anywhere. No foreigners in any country, no matter who they are, are permitted to take an active part in the internal affairs of the country where they are guests. And, least of all, are they permitted to engage in subversive activity. But such behavior, which is commonplace for American journalists (and others), is a measure of the arrogance and extreme hostility which such correspondents bring to their assignments in Moscow, and any hope that "fair and balanced" stories will come out of their pens is doomed in advance.

They, of course, contribute critically to the "deterioration of Soviet-U.S. ties"! In fact, achieving this often seems to be the reason they came to Moscow in the first place.

"Heroes" and "martyrs" are manufactured by the magic of the media—just as Nixon was (temporarily) transformed on TV from a used-car salesman type you wouldn't buy a car from to a great world statesman, so third-rate Soviet writers and malcontents picking away at their scabs are transformed by that magic into great writers and high-minded "dissidents".

For instance, Sakharov whom Craig Whitney, in a gush of girlish prose, found "towering." But Shipler had found him "bitter," complaining to all who would listen that the Western press had tired of him. Two of his former sympathizers had pictured him as "a general without an army . . . helpless in the fullest sense of the word." (*New York Times*, October 4, 1977.)

The group of ultra-reactionary Swedes into whose hands the legacy of the inventor of dynamite had fallen had awarded the Nobel Prize to Sakharov in a transparent attempt to confer distinction where none existed. Later, when they—apparently as a joke—awarded the same peace prize to those two sinister clowns, Begin and Sadat, at one blow they exposed both the hollowness of the award and its obvious political bias.

They had hoped to anoint Sakharov with the oil of bourgeois approval, creating out of him an ideological leader of Soviet

"dissenters." But when Shipler saw him, he seemed considerably less than a leader. In his *New York Times*' article (December 30, 1977), Shipler said, with some sadness, that the "dissidents" he had known in Moscow were "probably unrepresentative of any broadly held opinion," and worse than that some of "whose views contain overtones of racism, Russian supremacy in the Soviet Union and anti-Semitism."

And, then, unkindest cut of all, Shipler aims this barb at the "towering" figure of Sakharov: "Lacking friends and colleagues who understand something about Western opinion, Mr. Sakharov has struck some dissidents and Western correspondents as increasingly isolated and even bitter. He has lashed out several times at the press accusing it of 'giving dissent too little attention.'"

Similarly, an American writer, Grace Paley, on the feckless search for a Soviet "dissident" she could admire stumbled into some home truths about them she had not expected to find. "While in Moscow as members of the World Peace Congress, the Rev. Paul Mayer and I were fortunate to be able to speak to a few Russian dissidents and were surprised by their ignorance of American political and economic life. They simply didn't know. Some wanted never to know." (*New York Times*, June 17, 1974.)

Had she expected noble men and women *sans peur et sans reproche*? She found that Soviet dissidents wanted no facts about American reality that didn't conform to Sakharov's dream world where high-minded "moral leaders" led a contented and high-minded people. These "dissidents" couldn't care less about the fact that Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, two Black Panthers, had been slaughtered by the Chicago police after having been betrayed by an FBI plant! Ms. Paley had naively believed that Russian "dissidents" were democrats. They were not. They were "racists," "Russian supremacists" and "anti-Semites" (David K. Shipler). If *they* had been in Chicago, they would have been among those who cheered that killing!

The belief that these "Russian dissidents" were ennobled by their opposition to Soviet socialist society was based on the assumption that it was a tyranny they opposed, that in struggling against the "anti-democratic state," they were doing so for dem-

ocratic reasons. It was based on the anarchist assumption, too, that all states are the same, that all power is wicked, that every policeman represents a tyranny and every army an evil purpose. But what if all that wasn't so?

This latter possibility, however, they were not ready to accept.

But there was still one other aspect of Soviet "dissidents" that became clearer as the propaganda fogs lifted. They were *businessmen*. They had something to sell and they sold it.

Anti-Sovietism is not just a pastime, a hobby, with nothing but moral rewards. It's also big business. People make a great deal of money from it. In fact, careers have been launched from it that have lifted nonentities momentarily into the spotlight and paid them in the process more or less.

No different with the Russian defectors. The moment they arrive at Kennedy airport in New York, they're met by their literary agents who hand them "their book," already conveniently written, published, and complete with a quote from an awestruck review by *The New York Times'* John Leonard on the jacket. Then their statement to the press, already neatly Xeroxed in as many copies as you need, is handed to them and they suddenly discover when they read it that their reason for leaving the Soviet Union was not filthy lucre but "artistic freedom!" Why didn't they think of that?

A certain Bukovsky, also a Russian "dissident" (and surely as crazy as a bedbug, as anybody who saw him perform on Mike Wallace's "60 Minutes" would have to agree who heard him say that everybody in the Soviet Union, including Olga Korbut, was crazy but him!) nevertheless was canny enough to demand \$3,000 in advance before he would appear! There's method in that madness!

They come to America—these "dissidents"—with their hands already stretched out—as one commentator noted with some wryness. They know what they're worth. They had sensed that there was gold for them in the concocted moral stew, which was then being peddled as a "crusade for human rights," and so they bargained.

How much is a genuine Soviet-born anti-Sovieteer worth on the Market? It depends on the political weather. But it depends on one's talents here, too. Unschooled, as most of the latter-day

anti-Sovieteers are in the refinements of liberal rhetorical and moral hypocrisy, they often stumble over their lines, which they had not had time to commit to memory, or they deliver the wrong ones. Democrats—crusaders for human rights? They're *businessmen!* For their pottage of anti-Sovietism they barter you down to the last penny!

On January 8, 1977, a bomb exploded in a crowded Soviet subway. Bombings in the U.S.A. are common. In the first six months of 1979, there had been 573 bombings, with seven deaths, 82 injuries and more than \$3.5 million in property damage. The preceding year, 1978, for the same six-month period, "there were 627 bombings, 10 deaths, 70 injuries and more than \$5.8 million in property damage." (AP, September 27, 1979.)

But bombings are rare—practically non-existent—in the Soviet Union. The Soviet people are instinctively appalled at the idea that anyone could explode a bomb indiscriminately in—as happened this time on January 8, 1977—a subway where there were also children! If it was a political act, it roused nothing but horror and indignation in all Soviet citizens—except one. That one was Sakharov. In his first statement to the Western press, he implied that the bomb was planted by the Soviet police themselves. This was gratuitous slander and was already a symptom of the politically reckless and morally cynical level to which he had apparently sunk. No regret was voiced. Dozens of people had been hurt, several killed, among them children. But Sakharov, the "fighter for human rights" was unmoved by these deaths.

In due course, the bombers were caught and brought to justice. They happened to be Armenians, and later attempts would be made—which quickly fizzled—to extract out of the fact of their national origin some aroma of "dissidence." But again these "dissidents" refused to stick their faces into the card-board cut-off pre-picturing them as noble fighters for justice, and in court spewed out anti-Semitic threats and curses, again bitterly disappointing those Western journalists yearning for a genuine, 100 percent, lovable dissenter whom they could show off to the world with whinnies of pleasure and approval!

Still, Sakharov's adoration of all things American could sometimes be embarrassing. One didn't want to hear about the glories

of American democracy on the day Lt. Calley is revealed as being a mass murderer in the "defense" of that democracy! One reads a rhapsody about the American political system—and the mission of America to the world—to "carry with honor the burden history has placed upon her citizens and leaders"—with disbelief and astonishment, if not even resentment, the day Nixon proclaims that he's not a crook, and then is proven almost immediately that he is!

And the day Vice-President Agnew is exposed as selling his honor in the very precincts of the Capitol, is not the day to hear Sakharov say: "The West, its political and moral leaders, its free and decent peoples..." But these "moral leaders" had already been exposed as having plotted crimes untold against their own country and against the American people—always this is the coupling! Murders, assassination, wholesale robberies, bribery, plots to overthrow foreign governments (in Guatemala, Iran, Chile...), a scheme by which every American citizen is put under daily and relentless scrutiny for his "thoughts"... this is a nation of "moral leaders"? A darkness comes over one's brain!

What to do with this man whose ideas are not only unrepresentative of Soviet thinking, but even run counter to the average level of social awareness in the entire bourgeois world? The Nobel Committee (those faceless judges who play with dynamite) crowned him, in a spasm of Black humor, as a "peace" champion—this man who called on America to "strengthen its armaments," who had no hard words to say about the manufacture of the neutron bomb, who had found the genocidal actions of the U.S.A. in Vietnam not too unpleasant to his view, and in the murder of men, women and children in a Moscow subway saw nothing but a reasonable protest action of Soviet dissenters!

Commentators, and defenders of Sakharov, take care not to quote from his works too often, or scrutinize them too closely, because, typically unschooled in Western democratic rhetoric, he frequently falls into a political language which begins to resemble the ultra-extremists, bordering on the criminal.

Still, the West would have no objection to helping in the martyrdom of Sakharov, for from such "martyrdoms" are the wars of tomorrow prepared, and seeing the man in a town like Gorky

where he is obliged to work honestly for a living pains their very souls. How much nicer in a jail!

Of course he's a tool—but a willing tool.

Sakharov's statements are lovingly picked up by people like Whitney, then transmitted to the Voice of America, whence they return to the Soviet Union. They fall on deaf ears normally, but there was one exception. That one was the man Dmitry Tyuzhin who had been in the subway that January 8, 1977, when a bomb was exploded among the people and he, his wife and five-year-old daughter were hurt badly, but ten-year-old Vanya, his younger brother, was killed.

To his amazement, then horror, Tyuzhin would hear later that Sakharov had come out publicly in defense of the murderers even claiming that they were dissidents of a sort—"opponents of the system"—and presumably free to murder at will!

In an open letter to Sakharov published in *Izvestia*, which I found remarkable for its restraint, Tyuzhin reminded Sakharov that he was defending *murderers* who had not only made anti-Semitic statements in court but had tried to quote Hitler!—and by choosing any subway to bomb, they could easily have chosen one in which he himself, Sakharov, or his wife was riding!

So, by a logic that is iron—that is relentless—the dissident Sakharov, beginning with a rhetoric that borrowed the language of the generous-hearted heroes of the past, ends defending heroes who read from *Mein Kampf*!

So these were the types—and the milieu—surrounding Scharansky too! Scharansky was not a dissident like Sakharov. He was a Zionist. But Zionism has found itself not once but often in the same bed with the killers of Jews!

Zionism is Jewish nationalism—it was, and is, imperialism. It is not a cause that lifts the heart of mankind. In fact, all of mankind, through the U.N., had branded Zionism as *racist*, and before the whole world it was convicted of a crime of which it had itself been victim only yesterday!

Scharansky was a Zionist, and, as Zionism has led many another Jew ultimately into criminal positions—seeking and then helping to create anti-Semitism as a tool for furthering its policies of the in-gathering of all Jews—it also led him, with no particular resistance, to crime. From ideas he moved to acts,

His moral rationale was that he was serving the Jews, and so crime, in the hands of a zealot, becomes no longer crime but a virtue. But crime remains crime. And it was for his acts—passing military information to CIA agents posing as journalists—that he was tried in a Soviet court and found guilty.

This impudence—this attempt to ignore Soviet laws, to act as though they had no validity—so typical of Scharansky and other Zionists, was also how the two journalists, Whitney and Piper, behaved. They, too, had believed—being trained in America—that there was no moral obligation for them to observe Soviet laws.

So it was vital for the Soviets to force them to realize that they had no power in the Soviet Union where, as long as they lived there, they must obey the people's laws! To the Soviets, spying for America is not just matter for a spy thriller. It's a *crime*.

Having convicted Scharansky of a criminal offense, this should have closed the case. But American reaction—led by Carter who had other ideas—had decided to make an issue of it.

The real aim perceptible even then, though it would become much clearer later on, was to prepare public opinion to pass from the charge that the Soviet Union was violating "human rights" to the charge that it was a "military threat"—and in that sinister progression the Scharansky case had been slated to play its far from innocent part. If there had not been a "Scharansky" there would have been an—Afghanistan, and right on time, Afghanistan showed up!

As I saw it, the political implications were so monstrous that I recoiled from being a part of them—even passively.

I watched the Western press—about 300 of them—crowd into a little People's Court in one of Moscow's districts. It was July 10, 1978. And I asked myself: "What am I doing here?"

Was there any reason for me to join with the hounds that soon would be baying over the world? What purpose would I serve lending my voice, no matter how I managed to surround it with escape clauses about my devotion to socialism in general and yet telling the world how wrong I thought the Soviets were?

The case had been invented by the American press, cued to do so by the CIA (though to be "fair" about it, few in the press need such "cues") and had become a willing instrument in a

plan whose full features would become clearer in the months to follow.

For years *New York Times* the, *Washington Post* and other American newspapers had been pounding on the "human rights" issue in the Soviet Union, concentrating on the "third basket" of the Final Act adopted in Helsinki in 1975 and "forgetting" all the other "baskets." Taken together all the "baskets" which were a component part of that Act added up to a peaceful world in which detente reigned supreme.

But, following the Brzezinski strategy, the Carter Administration felt that the whole fabric of coexistence and peaceful relations between the two worlds that had been established with so much effort over so many years could be unraveled by pulling on one thread: the "human rights" of "dissenters." The tactic of "cooperation or confrontation" was also unveiled at the same time, the game of "linkage" was introduced (link Jewish emigration with—link business relations with—) as well.

The political problem which faced Washington however was how to reverse the positive trend that had set in between the Soviet Union and the USA, since the end of the Vietnamese war, at least, or even earlier—since the end of the policy of "containment", "rollback", "bridges"—all political bric-a-brac of the Cold War—without taking on the onus of bringing back the fears and tensions and dangers of that period?

At first, the issue that the West raised as a condition for continuing the policy of detente introduced by the Final Act was the issue of "dissent." The campaign went into high gear early in 1977. In January of that year, *The New York Times* carried 31 stories on questions of "human rights" in the USSR. In February that had risen to 54, and in March it was 58. And the rate never did slacken. The *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* were not far behind.* *In one week*, Western radio stations broadcast 120 such stories detailing the trials and tribulations, mostly invented, of Soviet "dissidents," with the aim obviously of convincing their listeners that the Soviet Union was boiling with dissent and a counter-revolutionary eruption was imminent with just a little help from their friends.

* *Columbia Journalism Review*, November-December, 1977.

Early enough—as early as the first part of 1977 therefore—it had become abundantly clear that a change in policy was gradually taking place in Washington. Carter did not want to make an open, dramatic break. Public opinion, both at home and abroad, was not ready for that.

He chose to move crab-wise, and by means of the best openings. The custom-made issue of “human rights”, of “dissent” came to hand. Championing the “right to dissent” could be pictured as no more than supporting a basic democratic “right” enjoyed by all Western democratic countries. Forget Chile, forget South Korea, forget South Africa, forget half the countries in Latin America all existing on the handouts of American largesse!

The important thing was—“dissent” in the USSR. Just “dissent”—without apparent content. As a style, as it actually had become in the West where “dissent” had no practical consequences except in next year’s wearing apparel.

If “dissent” was presented as benign—as nothing more than the routine exercise of generally accepted human rights—this was because obviously the real aim of such a tactic could not be bruited about. But the real aim was still the aim that Churchill had enunciated at the very birth of Soviet socialism—“to strangle the baby in its crib”! The “baby” was now a grown man, some 60 years later, and the job of “strangling” it had become harder, but many die-hard strategists of the West, especially in the USA, still considered it to be the *leitmotif* of their very existence!

They saw in pushing this issue their most likely tool for jimmying an entry into Soviet life. They supported “dissenters” not because these “dissenters” themselves could achieve the maximum aim of imperialist policy—the liquidation of socialism—but because their “cause” could rally—or could be presented as rallying, though the only forces that actually were “rallied” were not people but electrical gadgets—public opinion in the West behind a far more sinister aim than whether or not a handful of Soviet professional malcontents had the right to slander the country of Lenin openly.

And so a semblance of support was created. Of course, deciding how much of the furore created by the media on orders from

above actually represents the feelings of the people from below whose voice one never hears is always difficult. Various polls taken always indicated that the American people—so far as those polls could determine—backed peace and detente and were for a policy that led toward—not away from—international cooperation.

In any case, those naive or too-innocent liberals—and others—who rose to the bait and came out publicly in support of “dissent” in socialist countries discovered, when they went to bed that night, that they had acquired strange bed-fellows indeed: the military. And in pronouncing “dissent” they had also uttered the words, “arms race.” In saying “human rights” they found themselves also saying “wreck detente.”

This corruption—this liberal tragedy, in fact—of the idea of “dissent” from an admirable democratic concept, good for a society in which classes clash, to a weapon against peace—against socialism—and therefore, also, ironically, against democracy itself, was already visible in the Scharansky case.

Did this Zionist stand for any moral issue in the Soviet Union loftier than his Zionist masters did in the Middle East as they pursued their policy of genocide against the Palestinians? Were the Soviets morally required to give this man a platform in the U.S.S.R. to spread ideas that were killing Palestinians? Having suffered the deaths of 20 million of their people, were the Soviets justified in taking those measures they felt they required to make sure the monumental tragedy of the last war would not be repeated? They were wrong? Who are *you*—sitting safely in your arm-chair—to say so?

Hard experience, bloody years, untold damage to property, victims of words that turn so swiftly into bullets—all this goes far to explain why the Soviets and other socialist countries are so “stubborn” about not letting a handful of malcontents spout whatever they want to spout!

“Malcontents” of this kidney are indeed only a minor and unimportant minority, and alone, are incapable of any damage whatsoever. But the principle here is that they stand, ideologically, for a *class* that has been eliminated historically from the Soviet scene, and in fact, is dead in Soviet life—except. . . That “except” is where the Americans come in. The Soviet dissident

stand-ins for the capitalists who have been eliminated from Soviet life are supported from *outside* Soviet life—by American imperialism. And American imperialism is not just a bunch of college professors who like to debate high-minded questions. American imperialism has bombs.

The principle at stake is an important one. And that is, that America will not be allowed the “right” to establish in the Soviet Union a legal opposition. Having sacrificed millions to win the power to deny such a “right” to Hitler, the Soviet people are not in the mood to grant it to the Americans under the signboard of “democracy,” “human rights,” or anything whatsoever. American imperialism will have to speak to the Soviet people through Voice of America and not through home-grown Soviets who pose as representatives of something native when they are only the mouthpiece of something profoundly alien.

As more countries go socialist there will inevitably be more instances of individuals, unable to accept socialism, who will find themselves in lonely opposition.

The propaganda blitz around the Scharansky case had as its main target the American people—that became quite clear to me quite early. I had an obligation, therefore, to the people and to my own conscience to let them know, those I could reach with my half-muffled voice, that I did not share in this conspiracy, even though I had a ready-made protective cloak, if I wanted to use it—that I was nothing but a correspondent who could always protest that he was simply an onlooker merely reporting the “facts.” But, in this instance, the “facts” had been manipulated, invented: under the pretense that I was saying “human rights” I would be calling for the bombing of Moscow!

I looked the bourgeois correspondents over. I already knew quite a few of them. I had even heard the standard cop-out: “It’s-my-job” for writings which had no spark of conscience in them. I knew how these correspondents worked—in the perspective of even my life, I had often seen their faces in times of trouble for the workingman, for the Blacks, for the Indians, and never, *never* had the truth—never even a word of sympathy for their suffering—come out of them! Why then would the truth come out about the Soviet Union, which, one might say, was

the living refutation in its daily reality of all those lying stories they had written about America?

I knew, too, that next day the world would be girdled with black headlines taken from the stories they would send and millions of people would be told—there's no escape for it—a Big Lie. Men and women, whom I wouldn't trust, after all, to hold my cup of coffee for me while I went for the sugar, I was asked to trust on the most vital matter of all—war or peace!

What was my duty to myself and my paper and my readers in this case? Should I consent to the context in which I was inserted as a "correspondent," or what?

I left those 300 reporters flat. I went instead to a session of the World Peace Council and there listened as Romesh Chandra declared that world affairs had reached a "moment in which there is a dangerous turn in international affairs..." because "the enemies of peace and detente seek to create conditions that would make the world lose all the effects of detente."

He listed the moves made lately (in the summer of 1978) by the Carter Administration that were counter to detente—a "qualitative increase in new weapons of mass destruction," as the most important. All this before Afghanistan, of course!

The world—and particularly the people of the United States—needed to be alerted to *this*, and to its terrible implications, so that some kind of counter-attack could be mounted in time, far, far more than it needed to know whether a miserable Zionist agent, playing his part in the worldwide conspiracy to poison the international atmosphere of detente, had been fairly found guilty of his manifest crimes or not!

There is no moral responsibility for the press higher than the responsibility it owes to the people to defend peace. The press should seek out ways and means of bringing it about, denounce those who would undermine it, support those who would support it.

A LENIN SUBBOTNIK

*"Wo ye hear the children weeping,
O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?"*
Elizabeth Barret Browning,
The Cry of the Children

Bands were playing, red flags were flying everywhere, and on our street, Pravda, people armed with hoes, shovels and rakes were cleaning out the last brackish memory of winter.

It was Saturday, April 22, 1978. And it was a *subbotnik*.

All over the Soviet Union what was happening on Pravda Street was happening on other Soviet streets as far to the north as Murmansk and to the south as Sochi. Millions of people had come out of their homes, donating this day's work to their country.*

For nothing? Voluntarily?

I set out to see.

My destination was the Second Moscow Watch Factory on Leningradsky Prospekt—a stone's throw from where I live. It is one of the biggest watch factories in the U.S.S.R. and annually produces 8,700,000 watches of all kinds, 40 percent of them for export. Maybe you're wearing one. Mostly women work here—70 percent of the work force.

My first question this sunny Saturday morning was to Yuri Sorokin, Communist Party secretary of the factory. I asked him: "How many workers turned up today?"

"Over 90 percent."

"And the other 10 percent?"

"Absent for legitimate reasons—they're sick, on vacation, or otherwise legitimately off."

"And they're all here voluntarily?"

"Ask them yourself."

* About 150 million people took part in the *subbotnik* in 1980.—Ed.

But before I did I said: "Suppose I worked here and just didn't come in today because I didn't feel like it—saw no reason why I should put in a day's work for nothing. What would happen to me on Monday?"

"From the management—nothing. But your fellow workers would probably have something choice to say to you."

"And the ones who work, what, after all, do they get out of working for nothing?"

"Moral satisfaction."

"Moral satisfaction? Am I hearing you correctly?"

"Yes."

On that day—Sorokin told me—the factory would produce 32,500 watches valued at 295,000 rubles, which is a bit more than an average day's output. All profits would go to a special fund whose directors would decide what exactly to spend the money on—hospitals, sports complexes, libraries, or what?

Workers at the factory make a basic wage of (in 1978) 178 rubles a month, to which are added the various bonuses, special payments for innovations, for cost-cutting ideas, for upgraded skills, length of service, etc., as well as the "13th month wage": end-of-year bonus, determined by a number of factors which vary from factory to factory, but usually comes to an average additional month's pay.

A Soviet factory is not *just* a factory. It refracts the society itself; it is a mini-world. This factory has its own vocational school, sanatoria, sports complex, cultural clubs, creches, sports teams (including a rugby team) and owns a vacation resort in Sochi on the Black Sea to which 1,400 workers go every year (Sochi is comparable to the Italian and French Rivas), while many others go to different resorts of their choice. All this will cost the worker no more than 30 percent of the total.

Why do they do this? The answer to why is why not? It's their factory and they have the right to dispose of a certain percentage of their profits. There are no capitalists to pay off first; no coupon clippers to delight with unearned money the workers sweated for and the clippers clipped.

When we arrived at the workshops themselves, I entered first a large well-lit room in which work tables were arranged aisle by aisle, and before each table sat usually a woman who rum-

maged among little wheels and screws in trays before her, selecting what she needed to put a watch together so that it worked. In fact, the very idea that you could organize time with wheels and screws had never ceased to fascinate me. I could have watched them doing it all day.

But I wanted to speak to the workers themselves. I chose a woman of about 50. She was sitting, white smock and white cap, like a nurse, at an illuminated table absorbed in some intricate phase of her work.

"Why did you come to work today?" I asked her after apologizing for interrupting.

She looked up at me with surprise. "Don't you know what day this is? This is Lenin's birthday!"

"And do you consider Lenin's birthday sufficient reason to give a day's labor for nothing?"

"More than sufficient."

Well, I thought, she's a mature woman. She knows her political onions. I'll choose a young girl with no political or any other kind of experience. She won't have ready answers, surely. So I chose one who looked to be in her late teens. She flushed when I asked her the same question.

"Why, it's Lenin's birthday!" she said, as though this was a self-evident reason.

"And is that enough?"

She looked even more surprised and now even a little offended. "Yes, yes, of course."

Yes, of course! But what did this *mean*? What could it mean when a whole nation—millions of people—go to work voluntarily an extra day because—"of course"—it's Lenin's birthday?

It was, in fact, Lenin himself who had begun the first *subbotnik* years before. He had hailed the event as a precedent—as the first move toward creating the kind of socialist worker who would see in his labor its full social significance. Not just for himself and his family! But for himself and for everyone! That was the idea. Would it catch on? Here it was, how many years later? 50, 60?—and now *millions* of workers were contributing their labor in a conscious way to the general good. It *had* caught on. After his death, *subbotniks* were shifted to his birthday.

LITHUANIA



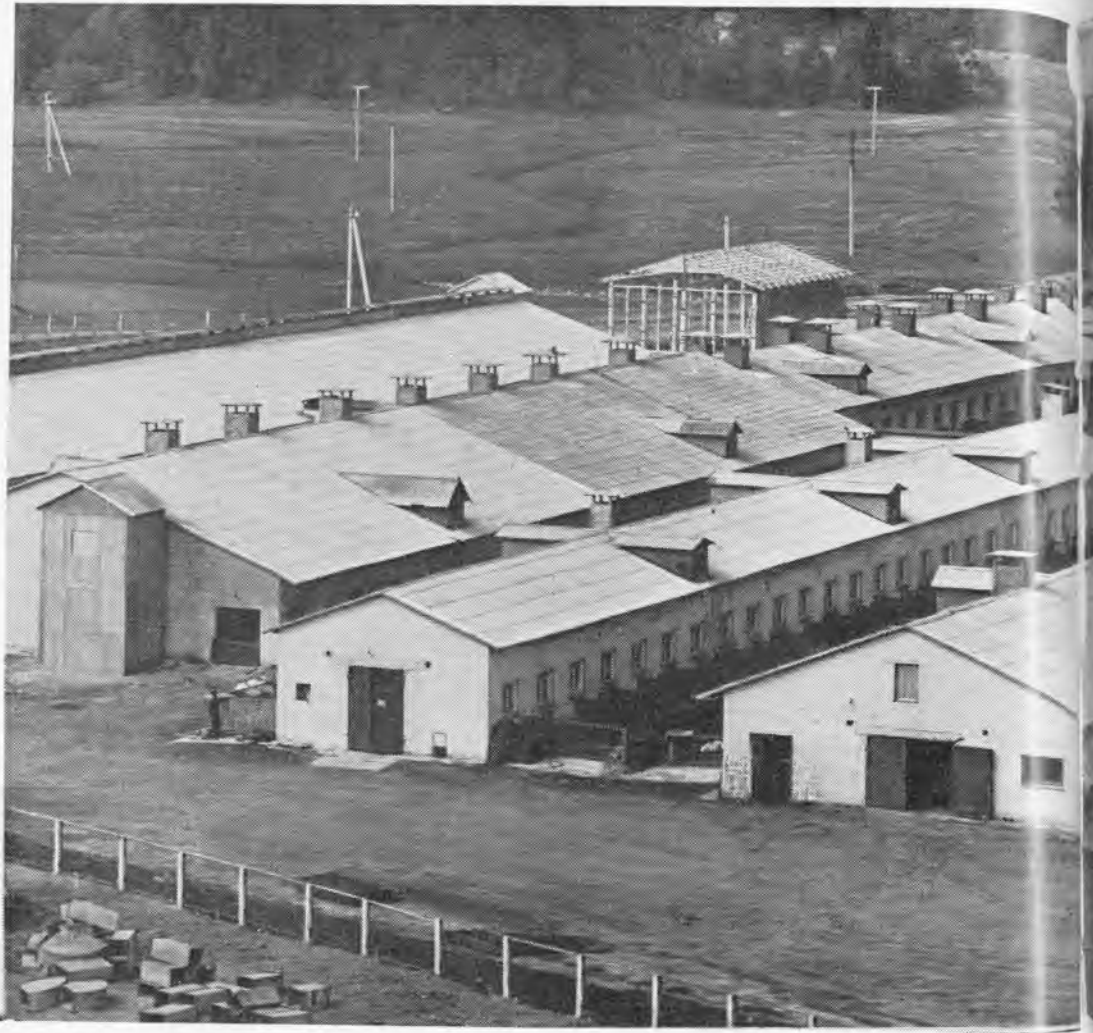
Downtown Vilnius



Lazdinai, a new residential development in Vilnius

These small TV sets are made at the Kaunas Radio Plant;
they are popular in the country and sold abroad





The new animal farm at Chuleniai Collective Farm





Farmers' homes at Draugas Collective Farm



House of Culture of Ritu Autra Collective Farm



Komsomol (Young Communist League) member Violetta Trikshene,
tractor operator at Linkaichiai Collective Farm

So I left the Second Moscow Watch Factory, came home along a street where people were busy gathering winter's debris into neat piles, and then—one year later—I returned to the same factory.

A year later the world had grown uglier. China had launched an attack on Vietnam and that long-suffering nation, already tormented beyond human endurance by a master of terror—American imperialism, American military—had to reach once again deep into its damaged heart for the courage to fight one more war, after 30 years of nothing but war! Kampuchea, too, had been pulled back from the brink of extinction, in as magnificent an act of human rescue as history had to show. It was not just a question of human rights in their case. It was a question of keeping them alive.

This year, on the initiative of workers in several factories, it was decided to turn over 75 percent of the *subbotnik's* profits to Vietnam.

This *subbotnik* was in celebration of Lenin's 109th birthday. Again the day was uncommonly beautiful (you wanted to go anywhere on a day like this than to a factory). This time I also chose workers at random. This time they were Galya Romanova, Volodya Kosenko, Lena Kovalchuk, and again I asked them, why?

Why care at all for anybody, let alone the Vietnamese? Mankind under capitalism (and earlier) had ground down into their very bones the idea that self-sacrifice was for saints not for ordinary people. The law of life was every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.

Was it plausible that millions of Soviets, on an individual basis, though millions at a time, could really sympathize and identify so closely with a people so different from them, certainly physically, and just as certainly in their history and culture? Where was Robin Knight's "instinctive" Russian prejudice against "yellow people"? Wouldn't it come out here if ever?

What was the bond between them?

Lenin was the bond. That is, the ideas of Lenin were the bond between the blond northerner and the dark southerner. Speaking the common language of Leninism, each understood the other. There was a kind of miracle at work there.

And I would see it operating among, not especially sensitive souls who had risen above their prejudices, by an heroic moral effort, as an exceptional personal achievement, but among millions (including workers of this factory) of women and men who, yesterday, were themselves the "dark people" of Russia—that many-million mass of anonymous sufferers bound to the soil by poverty and ignorance and only the hardest optimists of history could see in their bent backs and gnarled minds the free workers of today modestly helping others to overcome those enemies of theirs they had overcome just yesterday.

The past is not dead in the souls of most Russians. Everybody has or had a grandmother or *babushka* who remembers the days of the Czar. They know what age-old poverty is and what war is. Their instructors drove home the lessons of history to them with burning brands.

When they see a Vietnamese they see their own past immediately before them. Hardly more need be said.

To Galya Romanova, who worked for nine years in the watch factory, the suffering of the Vietnamese was very close. She had suffered for them during the American invasion of that country. She had been horrified that the Chinese had picked up where the Americans had left off.

For all Soviets their own war is still an open wound. "We can help a bit," she told me. Her "bit" was her day's wages. "And I hope it will help."

Was this feeling typical of almost 10,000 others working that day?

To Volodya Kosenko I said: "Wouldn't you rather spend the money you could make here today on vodka or cognac?" I had stopped him on his way through the shop. He was 27 years old, had worked as a repairman in the factory—coming to it as an apprentice—for 10 years.

He smiled but his answer was: "No, I'd say it was much better to send it to Vietnam."

As it happened, his wife also worked there—he pointed her out to me—and then he added that his sister, father and mother also worked there. Their total contribution to Vietnam that day was not a small one.

Lena Kovalchuk was startled when I suddenly stopped in front

of her bench and asked point-blank why she was giving a day's wages to Vietnam—she was no more than 18—and gathering her wits together she said she was “happy to do it—to help fight for peace.” She “hated war,” she said. “She was happy that she was doing something—had the opportunity to do something—practical to help them.

And so it went. . .

Without knowing it then, I also passed by a particle of history in that same shop in the form of Margarita, whose maiden name had been, Shkunova. For Margarita was the daughter of Mikhail Shkunov, who was the last unemployed man in the U.S.S.R. When as a demobilized soldier in 1930 he was given a job, the labor exchange closed its doors, and from then on nobody in the Soviet Union has been out of a job unless he chose to be. It was his daughter who worked in the Moscow Second Watch Factory. . .

This year was like last year. It was a kind of miracle. I could have asked dozens more the same questions but would have gotten the same answers not because the answers were rehearsed but because on the issue of war or peace, of help to suffering Vietnam, they all naturally thought the same way. All expressed themselves with characteristic modesty. People are diffident about using grand words to describe feelings that they consider to be normal.

But still it was amazing to me to hear these “ordinary” people tell me about what—from history's point of view—is an extraordinary fact.

They *know* why they're sacrificing a day's wages, and nobody has to read them an editorial from *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, or *Trud*. What they do with such good-heartedness is really the secret of the Soviet Union's enormous internal integrity. None of these workers is likely to be “dissident” material, and the reason why there's such a cry of frustration and even despair among the so-called “dissidents”—that they walk alone—is because the people couldn't care less what they have to say.

Here Solzhenitsin and Scharansky are out of place—moral cripples.

ROCK AND ROLL—AND KARATE

“Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peascod, or a codling when 'tis almost an apple: 'tis with him in standing water, between boy and man. He is very well-favoured, and he speaks very shrewishly.”

Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

Every good reporter knows that the second-best way to get a story is to interview witnesses, survivors and experts.

But the *best* way to get a story is—get shot out of the cannon yourself. Or, in this instance, go have an operation in a Soviet hospital.

Let me add immediately. Going to Volinskaya Hospital was not out of a reporter's curiosity, or from a too-zealous sense of duty, but on orders from a higher power: a doctor.

I've known many American hospitals and would have preferred remaining in personal ignorance about Soviet hospitals. My first two-week stay as a boy in a hospital cost my father—an ordinary day laborer in a steel mill—more than he made in three months, and finding the money to pay the bill plunged our family into a crisis. Later visits too were dogged by the money ogre. My last visit to a hospital in New York had been a few months before coming to Moscow. Money there, too, despite Blue Cross. Blue Cross has its limits. By the time we left for Moscow we were paying \$2,000 insurance premium a year to Blue Cross—in three years you had pre-paid your week in the hospital. (It's all so much higher now.)

Coming out of an operating room in New York the anesthetist used to place his bill right on the stretcher—it was the first thing you saw when daylight struck. Sickness in America is not only a threat to one's life, but to one's income, which are often the same. He who does not know the humiliation of being told that unless the money is forthcoming the pain will not be relieved, does not know what America is about.

There are millions of people in America who simply have

no medical protection whatsoever and if they get clinic care, such help is always stained with the contempt of a society which places money above all other values. Even promises of some kind of federal medical insurance, some pie-in-the-sky day, are actually plans for guaranteeing profits to the medical Mafia—those peddlers of pills for profit—and not a true medical care system at all.

Enough of that! The whole world knows the story.

And the Soviet Union? Surely by now the whole world also knows that all medical services, from taking out tonsils to the endless care and expense of chronic illnesses, is free? Surely everyone knows by now that it costs nothing in the U.S.S.R. for a hemophiliac to get blood, for you to get a kidney, me to get a heart, a nose or an ear, or to pull a tooth?

Volinskaya Hospital is a group of buildings set within a park of birch, fir and linden trees. It's within the city limits but seems to be in the country. It has 500 beds and there are 100 doctors servicing the patients in those 500 beds. This comes to one doctor per five patients. It's very individual attention indeed.

To get in this, or any hospital, you don't really have to be sick. People are often sent to hospitals to keep them from getting sick—for examination, for care. (Nobody except the very rich can afford preventive medical care in the U.S.A.) Patients who go to hospitals in the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed their full, or almost their full, salaries.*

Of the 100 doctors in the hospital, two-thirds are women. Women's Lib hasn't even begun to dream of achieving something like this—it's utopian in the U.S.A. My doctor was Zinaida Nikolayevna, and a couple days after I came there I would meet her again in the operating room where she proceeded to do her job quite skilfully. (Eliminating a minor growth.)

When I looked up at her—lying on the operating table—I had no feeling of insecurity because she was a woman and unknown

* In case of illness white- and blue-collar workers receive allowances ranging from 50 to 100 percent of their wages, depending on length of service. In case of temporary disability due to injury while at work, or professional illness, the allowance granted amounts to full wage irrespective of length of service.—*Ed.*

to me. She talked to another doctor as she worked and when she was finished she pronounced her judgment on her own work: "*Horosho*" ("Good").

"*Bistro*", said I. ("It was quick.")

During my eight-day stay in the Soviet hospital for something that they would have whisked me into and out of in a day in New York (as indeed they did), I was surrounded by constant solicitude and concern. Every test known to man was taken, and always the technician was a woman. I had the definite impression they didn't want to lose me.

Later, when I put on my reporter's hat I asked my doctor what she would say if I asked her how much I owed her? And more, if I had told her when we first met that I couldn't pay her price, would she have told me to go try somewhere else—Welfare, for instance?

She was genuinely shocked at the idea. She didn't understand what "Welfare" meant, and I never quite managed to make it clear. (They lack a frame of reference.) "It's been 60 years since anybody asked that question in our country," she said to me in a tone of reproach. "And since I'm younger than 60 I have never heard it asked until right now. It's unthinkable in our country to talk about money in connection with medical services. And to humiliate a human being who didn't have the money to pay by telling him to seek charity—this is unbelievable, it's just impossible for us to understand it! I guess we don't believe it is true in our hearts, though we have to believe what you say. We take free medical care for granted. It's like the air we breathe. It's just our natural right and nobody thinks twice about it."

In a later visit, I would meet two pieces of living evidence of how right she was.

When the nurse showed me into my room I found that there were two other beds in it, though empty at the moment. Who could they be, I wondered. I found out.

They burst into the room—two teen-age boys—and ran to their portable short-wave radio. In a minute, I was hearing American Rock and Roll. I had to go 5,000 miles to escape that, I thought, only to meet it head-on, and in my weakened state, in a Soviet hospital! I stuck my face behind a copy of the Paris

Herald Tribune and wondered how long it would take before it went away.

In a moment I heard a yell, a thud, a guttural grunt, and, alarmed, looked up to see who was getting killed. The two boys were at each other—kicking, yelling, grunting, jabbing straight-arming, rolling over the bed, onto the floor, and there, looking up, one of them caught my amazed expression and barked: “Karate!” And went right back to punching and grunting.

They were interrupted by the arrival of a nurse, and without a word from her they mounted the beds and took a kneeling position. Down slipped the bottom half of their pajamas and up rose two pale half-moons. The nurse took aim and landed a needle into each one. They looked back at me with chagrin.

So that was how I got to meet Boris and Alexei—both 16, both students with one more year to go in high school, both studying English, but neither of whom had known each other outside of the hospital. They had something wrong with their noses. But they looked like just what they were—dynamos of teen-age energy.

That they were in the same room with an American journalist must have seemed very exotic to them. In any case, with their high school English and my undernourished Russian, we managed to exchange opinions on a variety of subjects.

First, they explained to me that they actually weren't trying to kill each other, that both were karate novices, neither had won a “belt” yet, but hoped to one day. Though they had done a lot of yelling and grunting, had I noticed (no, I hadn't) that no blows were actually landed? The sport was all technique. Alexei showed me a magazine devoted to karate. And as for the radio, and the Rock and Roll (“Don't you like Rock and Roll?”) it was a Soviet short-wave program beamed for the world that they were listening to. Did *they* like Rock and Roll? Yes, they admitted. Very much. They'd collected records, American, British, French, Soviet, all kinds of Rock and Roll.

Did they feel in listening to Rock and Roll they were being corrupted by American culture?

No, why, how? They liked all kinds of music. They liked American music, and saw no connection between that liking

and becoming teen-age counter-revolutionaries, any more than being karate novices opened them up to Japanese influence.

They wanted me to tell them about the U.S.A. It would seem to be a fairly easy thing to do—you spoke about the tall buildings in New York City, the cars, wealth, the “craziness,” the movies and TV and Rock and Roll, Elvis Presley, Jane Fonda, Pete Seeger. . .

But no. It’s not that easy. For the moment you go beyond show-biz America to real America you run into trouble. You come up against an essential lack in their Soviet emotional and mental makeup which frustrates any attempt to make a connection. Just as with the doctor who lacked a frame of reference, so with these two kids, you talked to a blank wall. Or worse: to some kind of porous material: your words ran through them without touching them.

Socialist life is now part of the *unconscious* of millions of people in the world, and in the Soviet Union generations have been born and grown up who know nothing different. Just as the average American assumes the world’s a jungle, with no meaning and no hope, the average Soviet assumes that it’s a puzzle susceptible to solution if the key is Marxism, and that not only is there a solvable future but a very specific one.

The assumptions on which socialism exists conform to the perception of life which these boys had. If it did not, *then* Brzezinski would have had a chance! So when you try to conjure up a world in reasonable terms that rationally explains unemployment, inflation, militarism, racism, do you vote Democrat or Republican, and why in God’s name do you?—crime in your kitchen, teen-age dope, early death on the needle, strikes, enormous riches, incredible poverty, cults of all kinds, gas becoming as valuable as gold, and so on, and suggest that if you are a teen-age boy and have something wrong with your nose you’d better have your Blue Cross paid up, or money in hand before you can get into a hospital—you come up against a problem.

All this goes past their eyes like a magician’s hands: where the bird comes from cannot be seen, nor how the elephant disappears. It’s all make-believe, illusion, from another world.

Unemployment. They just don’t know what that is—abstract-

ly they do, but actually they don't. They've never heard, let alone known, anybody who was out of work, unemployed. What is unemployment? Try to explain it. It results when more—too much—is produced than can be sold. *Too much*? And workers are laid off because they produce too much? This is incomprehensible. How can there be too much produced when there's too little consumed? Do people want things? Yes. But they can't buy them? No. Why? Because they don't have the money; they're out of work. Why don't they just go to work? Because the system won't allow them. But *everybody* works!

No, laddie, they don't. Once upon a time, in the long-ago, there too was a land called Russia in which people lost their jobs and were unemployed. Ask your *babushka* about it. She might be old enough to remember tales. . .

You pass from the incomprehensible to the comprehensible, their own futures. What are they? Boris wants to be a journalist, and Alexei apparently some kind of engineer. In another year they'll be out of high school. They can take an exam to get into college; if they fail this time they can try next year. If they don't make it to college, there are many other schools they can go to to learn some skill or trade—and later they can still go to college if they show the inclination.

But these two boys looked smart enough to pass their exams, I thought. Boris, who liked Rock and Roll so much, added to me that while being a journalist was a "dream," he expected to end up teaching the History of the C.P.S.U. (Communist Party of the Soviet Union). Later, he would tell me he had shifted to deciding to study economics—concentrating on America.

Did all this go with Rock and Roll? Yes, it did. And with karate, and with dancing at school, and dating, and long, long thoughts. The dire associations that are made with certain ideas of the West, whose implications are all spelled out in lurid tales of "dissent," etc., do not really travel well across the water. Things are more innocent—ideas come untouched with social corruption, and the frenzied, out-of-mind, stoned Rock and Rollers, that are so much part of the Western scene, have no soil here in which to grow, bourgeois reports to the contrary notwithstanding. In any case, what is one to think of a policy of "free flow"

which aims, not to extend and expand the healthy instincts of youth, but to corrupt them?

The *Herald Tribune* has a page devoted to Stock Market quotations. Boris wanted to know what that meant. Here, indeed, was the acid test: how could I explain to a boy who has never heard of the Stock Market, except as a word in a history book, whose society had abolished the very concept long before he was born, and the necessity for which had vanished forever from the scene? How could I explain what buying and selling stocks was all about, what "futures" as seen on the Market were, what selling short was, what a bull or bear market was?

What is a "stock"? What is a "bond"? Why are they sold? What's "selling" as understood on the Stock Market? How can a Stock Market "crash"? How can its crashing cause suffering and pain? Drive millions of people out of work, cause others to lose their property, their savings?

When not an iota of experience common with yours exists in the background of these boys, to explain something so fundamental to capitalism as the functioning of a Stock Market, you have to start with Adam and Eve and if you can explain why Eve had no navel and Adam did, then perhaps you can begin to explain, on that same unnerving logic, what a Stock Market is. You will have to resort to myth and fable, and with no great hopes that any spark of recognition will click in your friends' brains.

None did. You give up with relief. In fact, why try to explain? If you wait long enough, there won't be any Stock Market anywhere you have to explain. Like so many other words lost in the mists of history these boys would know of it only from their dictionaries, followed by the symbol, *annach*. (anachronism, out of date).

Another enigma to them was inflation. How explain inflation to a boy who has never experienced it? Since there were no concrete examples in Soviet life to point to, it became an exercise in abstractions. I asked Boris whether he needed money, how he got it, how much he got, and what he did with it. Did he miss not having more of it?

No, he said. What money he needed he got from his parents. And he didn't miss not having more. As for the "bigger things"

he might want to buy that was something else. By "bigger things" he meant something like his portable short-wave. For that he had to convince his parents that he had to have it.

Same with Alexei? More or less.

Then I pointed to an item in the *Herald Tribune* which cited the zooming rise in hospital and housing costs. I said to them, since their complacency about all the things in their lives that they took for granted, like little princes, had irked me, "You know, if you lived in America, neither of you could afford to come to a hospital and stay so long (Boris will wind up in about three weeks) for what is, after all, a minor problem—polyps in the nasal passage. Or, if you could afford to go to a hospital, it would cost you a very pretty penny. And even so, there are millions of people who cannot afford to go to a hospital. How would you feel knowing *you* can get help but somebody else cannot because they don't have the money?"

This is a moral dilemma they had never contemplated before in their lives. Their brains are not up to it. They have been taught since childhood that theirs was a society in which privilege did not accrue to money—to class (of which there were no more antagonistic ones). Differences exist, some people have a bigger income than others, but these differences have not solidified into a *caste*. Advantages are not inherited, nor handed down from privileged to privileged. They are the result of work, study, education. And even those differences with advantages will become more and more benign as the society flourishes, and the formula of "from each according to his work, to each according to his needs," comes into operation.

But the "major inarticulate assumptions" which lie at the root of personality, are *socialist*—though these two boys are not fully aware of it. The difference between them and Western youth is that intellectually and morally they *start* at a point which Western youth are still to reach. For them, what Western youth struggles to make conscious as against *their* unconscious—bourgeois—assumptions, is no longer a problem. And this is characteristic not only of students or intellectuals, but is a *mass* phenomenon. When Soviet immigrants come to America they're described as suffering "cultural shock." But this glib phrase does not even begin to describe what actually happens. For deposited

in the typical Soviet citizen is a sediment of rich historical experience which feeds his soul and shapes his unconscious in a way that is totally unknown to the typical citizen in a bourgeois country. And when the Soviet immigrant wakes up to discover that he's not *like* these people he's come to live with, a spiritual shudder runs through his whole system down to the roots which scream in silent pain. For it's not just a matter of language or "custom" that's different. Those millions of his forebears who fought to free themselves, not once but twice, and in their struggle lit up the secret springs of history and life, have not passed through the psyche of any Soviet citizen without changing it decisively and forever. That is why Soviet immigrants suffer an agony to which they have not yet given a name, and why when they add up what they gained by leaving their country and contrast it with what they lost, they turn from the unhappy sum with despair.

Boris comes from a solid Communist family background. One of his grandmothers, a Latvian, who had just died, had been a Communist for 60 years—she had been through the Revolution and the War. He had a living great-grandfather—then 95. This old man's roots were still in the pre-revolutionary past. One of his grand-uncles was killed during the war with Nazi Germany. His father was in charge of cultural cadres in trade-union sanatoria and his mother was a journalist for an economics magazine.

He was an only child—a rather tall, gangling, "serious" boy. Alexei was discharged soon after I arrived and I missed some of his biography, short as it was. But both boys were examples of the kind of Soviet youth who are intelligent, dedicated, feel behind them a vast, nurturing social approval and a constant connection with a social system that exists, not outside and apart from them, to which they were "alienated," but inside them, its laws, their unspoken psychological assumptions, which shape their thoughts, characters, even (as I would see) their noses. They were pure products of socialism. But they themselves were not fully aware of just how profoundly a product of socialism they were because they lacked contrast.

The hospital showed movies on Mondays and Boris took me—he had become my interpreter—to see one. The movie was

called "Early Love," and to my surprise, dealt with a teen-age love affair, with the girl getting pregnant. The girl's story is told with great sympathy—with all the moral implications fully examined—up to and including her final visit to the lying-in hospital where the baby is born.

Her parents are seen as understanding and non-interfering. The boy, too, is seen more or less sympathetically as weak, good-looking, popular with the other girls, sought-after, but without real character, as defined by his choices. The girl, who had character, would go on with her life and with the baby, unwed.

I'd not seen this problem handled by Soviet film before, and wondered what Boris thought of it. "I like it," was what he thought of it, and it was apparent to me that this "problem" was not unknown to him and no doubt remained a potent possibility in his teen-age world. (Later, when I came to visit the family, he'd reveal to me he had a girl-friend at school. He'd also show me proudly his Lenin library—and his records of Louis Armstrong!)

The picture showed a social problem, without pornography, and without sensationalism. Teen-age love, as everyone knows, can lead either to joy or—to tragedy. Here, it led to greater maturity.

So that was Boris and Alexei—very typical Soviet youth. They resembled Shipler's "typical" 16-year-old Soviet youth only in the most tangential way. Of course they liked Rock and Roll! Of course they liked blue jeans! Of course, of course, and of course!

But they weren't just the product of their glands. They also had brains. They were also, and this was decisive, rooted profoundly in a socialist society which is itself historically rooted in everything positive and growing in the world!

The boy who liked Rock and Roll showed me his collection of Lenin and Marx. He spoke proudly of his Bolshevik grandmother, of a grandfather that died fighting the fascists. Socialism as a habit, as a tradition rooted in his soul, was not some fly-by-night notion that a couple of bongo drums could destroy!

GENTLE LITHUANIA

*On my palm I bring you
Golden like the sun,
This pale piece of amber,
Gentle Lithuania,
The Baltic, in my hand!*

Salomeja Neris

In February, 1979, about 50 correspondents from the bourgeois press came to Vilnius, Lithuania.

Vilnius was *in* Lithuania, but for many of the correspondents Vilnius was *still* part of bourgeois Poland, and for the American correspondents particularly there was another difficulty—this part of the Soviet Union officially for Americans didn't exist at all.

Still, they came to Vilnius as part of Lithuania and not Poland and as the capital of a republic in the Soviet Union. Facts are facts.

Ever so often *New York Times* dusts off an aging editorial which it republishes (when informed in time) each year deploring the "captive" fate of the Baltic states (Estonia and Latvia plus Lithuania) in eelymosynary prose: "I weep for you. . . I deeply sympathize. . ."

The official position taken by the *Times*, reflecting the government position, is that the Baltic states did not voluntarily choose to join the U.S.S.R. in 1940 but were taken over, annexed, by "Russia" instead. Ever since, Lithuanians have been subjected to something called "Russification," which though never actually seen is always a dire presence, so that today you must certainly find a country of weeping widows, orphaned children, jails crammed with "dissidents," patriotic nationalists pining away in dungeons, a landscape bleak and forbidding, populated with beggars, and children chattering in broken Russian while their own native language dries up in their mouths . . . and so on . . . and so on . . .

One of the remarkable facts of our times is that it's possible to report accurately what the dark side of the moon looks like, show the world what Venus is really like behind her veils, what Jupiter and even what the sun are made of.

But it's impossible to get a reliable report on what parts of *this* world are really like!

If Lithuania were suspended in outer space or hidden behind seven veils of clouds, one might excuse reports that two-headed monsters with green eyes plausibly gambol about in the sinister valleys. After all, why not?

Venus is far from us and Lithuania is near. No man has yet set foot on Venus, but you can get to Lithuania from wherever you are in a few hours by plane, a little longer by boat. And yet reports about Lithuania (as about the other Soviet Baltic states) might as well be reports of a country way back of beyond.

In fact, the reports which the 50-odd "Western" correspondents sent back from their visit to Lithuania in February, 1979, might have been about one of the unknown planets hanging in space. For all they discovered in Lithuania were—devils.

Devils. Just devils.

Lithuania is a prosperous, bustling, growing *young* republic. Its culture however has deep roots in the past. Its land is rich. Its people are enormously gifted, industrious, and have, in a short time, rebuilt what was a war-ravaged desert, made so by the Nazis during their occupation in 1941-44, to a flourishing, industrial country that manufactures a whole line of industrial goods under social conditions that were unthinkable before 1940 when Lithuania was noted more for her butter (which she sent abroad) than for her computers, which she now manufactures and uses at home.

Lithuania is also an ancient land. It is the land of amber—that mysterious caught sunshine. Its language is the oldest living Indo-European language in Europe, allied to Sanskrit. Philologists have studied and still study it for clues to past languages and civilizations. Scientists peer into its amber in which million-year-old flies are caught forever preserved in petrified pine resin. From the shreds of palm trees found in amber it was learned that once northern Europe had a tropical climate.

Lithuania's history has known periods when Lithuanian kings ruled over large parts of Poland, Russia and the Ukraine. The farthest the Mongols reached was Lithuania where they were stopped. From the West, Lithuanians fought the Crusaders who

came with sword and cross (sometimes the sword *was* the cross); and finally, about the 14th century Lithuania capitulated to Rome, the European country to do so, and drew on a Catholic gown.

Catholicism brought no light but only a deeper, medieval darkness, to the people. And, significantly, it brought the devil.

Yes, it was God who brought the devil to Lithuania, for the devil is the logical antithesis of the angel, and is more interesting than the sexless, eternally unspecified, unreal angels, who are what is left after man has been emptied of character. Men deposit everything human in the devil—though in the form of a reproach.

Life was hard. Life, in fact, was unending misery. And to explain that misery one needed the devil.

Lithuania has always lovingly preserved its language. In fact, to speak the language meant to *be* Lithuanian—for conqueror after conqueror—had always tried to destroy the language in the effort to destroy the people. But the language survived in secret when it was driven underground, and when the people at last came to live in freedom, as now, they celebrate it proudly and openly and everywhere. Lithuanian, as a language, is dying only among Lithuanians in emigration—where a kind of linguistic suicide is taking place.

Today, not only is the present language cultivated and studied, though hardly more than 3 million people* speak it. The language of the past is also preserved. The Lithuanian Academy of Sciences has done a tremendous job collecting songs, melodies, folk tales, etc. At last an exhaustive dictionary in 16 volumes has been published (for the first time in Lithuanian history). Local dialects have been recorded. Studies in the language itself have been institutionalized and made scientific in Vilnius University (whose 400th anniversary was celebrated in September, 1979), which also publishes *Baltica*, a bulletin on language studies and research, circulated throughout the world.

In Lithuania children no longer die just because they were

* According to the 1979 census Lithuania's population was 3,399,000.—*Ed.*

UKRAINE



Kreshchatik, the main artery of Kiev, capital of the Ukraine



October Revolution Square in Kiev





Bridge across the Dnieper in Kiev, with Rusanovka, a new residential development, in the background



Ukraina Collective Farm's House of Culture in the Nikolaev Region



Harvesting winter
wheat at a collective farm
in the Odessa Region

Orchards cover
the Ukrainian landscape
by the thousands



A scene from "When the Fern's in Bloom," a ballet and opera. The G. Veryovka Ukrainian Folk Choir performing

Family ensemble of Shevchenko Collective Farmers in the
Donetsk Region



Amateur orchestra of Carpathian folk instruments
Leading performers of an amateur ensemble in Lvov Region

unlucky enough to be born. Lithuania which, in capitalist days, had the highest infant mortality rate in Europe today has one of the lowest—it dropped 86 percent under socialism.

In Lithuania today men no longer go on bread-lines. Unemployment doesn't exist. But in 1940—the last year of bourgeois rule—there were 76,000 men who couldn't get a job at all in a country of 3 million, and 250,000 farm hands worked only seasonably. From 1929 to 1939 80,000 Lithuanians left their homes to look for work abroad. Today, Lithuanians come back to Lithuania from abroad.

Today, the country which had one of the highest illiteracy rates in Europe has no illiterates at all. In fact, for its 3 million people it has 150,000 specialists with a college education and a constant flow of students—there are always at least 70,000 of them at any one time in the higher schools—replenish the scientific and cultural stock. This is 20 times more than in 1939 during capitalist times.

This same one-time leading land of illiterates now leads the world in per capita book-buying and -reading. Farmers, for instance, subscribe on an average to six or seven magazines and newspapers at the same time that they have their personal libraries—not to speak of the public libraries easily accessible to the remotest hamlet.

One-time Lithuania of pigs and cows expects to have its industry fully automated by 1990—with hundreds of factories run on cybernetic principles controlled by a single complex. When Lithuania was exploited by the capitalists it had to import nails and matches because it couldn't make them itself. Today, it exports not only nails and matches but complicated machines to 85 foreign countries. More than 200 large-scale plants and factories, which were never in existence before, in fact, were brought into being, financed by all-Union funds, since 1945.

From 1965 to 1978, per capita income doubled—Lithuanians make more money and buy more things now than ever before in their entire history.

Of its population, 80 percent are native Lithuanians; some 9 percent are Russian; some 7.5 percent are Polish; and 3.5 percent are spread among Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Jews, etc. Everyone knows Lithuanian. Although Russian is the second

language in Lithuania, as it is in all other non-Russian republics, and is also one of the official languages of the U.N., Lithuanian is the language in which the business of the state is conducted, in which the people speak, learn, write and think.

When the Nazis occupied Lithuania in 1941—killing children playing on the ocean's sands at Palanga—Lithuanians formed 94 guerrilla detachments, which united thousands of partisans, and during three years of resistance, those partisans derailed 600 German trains with enemy troops and material, destroyed 110 bridges, smashed 18 German garrisons, and wiped out more than 14,000 German men and officers and collaborators. In his prize-winning novel, *The Lost Home*, Jonas Avyžius, gives a vivid picture of the German occupation, showing who were collaborators and why. And in his movie, *Nobody Wanted to Die*, Žalakevičius showed, unforgettably, the play of human forces in the struggle against counter-revolution—a movie which won all kinds of prizes in Europe.

There were Lithuanian collaborators with the Nazis. Some foolishly believed that their formula—"neither red nor brown"—would be honored by the Nazis—whose real aims were unmistakably expressed by Goebbels in his diary entry (March 16, 1942):

In the East, nationalistic currents are increasingly observable in all former Baltic States. The population there apparently imagined that the German Wehrmacht would shed its blood to set up a new government in these midget states. . . . That is a childish, naive bit of imagination. . . .

Instead, the Reich's plans were to be, as Alfred Rosenberg, Reich Minister, expressed it quite clearly:

The Reich's representatives in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania should aim for the establishment of a German protectorate, so that in the future these regions may be incorporated into the German Reich, germanizing the racially suitable elements and destroying the undesirable elements.

Incidentally, this "racially suitable" cachet of the Nazis is echoed by America which officially finds Lithuanians highly ac-

ceptable as immigrants to the U.S.A. because of their ethnic characteristics of fair skin, hair and blue eyes, "Nordic," or approximately so. The reward for their American acceptability is to disappear as a people—tens of thousands of Lithuanians have so disappeared in a charade of assimilation in the "melting pot."

Lithuanian collaborators included at least 300 of Lithuania's 900 priests. Many of these priests had not only passively collaborated with the Nazis, under the mistaken impression that they had found the St. Georges of liberation in their crooked crosses, but had actively supported the Nazis, some of them with guns. Killers. It was these who fled, and some of them can be found today in the U.S.A.

Some 700,000, including half a million Lithuanians, died at the hands of the Nazi hangmen on Lithuanian soil during the war.

Lithuania now is a prosperous country by anybody's standards. But its persecutors were not devils. They were men.

The so-called Lithuanian "Nationalists," who claimed that they loved their country above all else, "proved" it by running away with the Nazis—who did not love Lithuania—first to Germany and then to America which loves it even less, where they "prove" it again by dreaming of plans to return with shot and shell and blood. Meanwhile, in reality, they grow older, their children abandon Lithuanian, or what is almost the same thing, learn a quasi-language, which stopped growing when their parents left their homeland, and which is a caricature of the living Lithuanian. They die off as aliens in an alien land, their children grow up as fake Americans, forgetting where they came from, and so they disappear into the great anonymous American maw from which they never return as Lithuanians. All they have left is a memory of a distant homeland which grows more distorted and unreal with time.

Craig Whitney went to Vilnius after the Pope's visit (1979) to Poland, and all he could see in Lithuania was not a thriving country risen from the ashes—but a country whose leadership does not encourage religion—in fact, has separated the church from the state. If Whitney ever lives to see 1776, as a loyal subject of George III, he will be the first (and the *Times* along with him) to denounce Jefferson, Franklin, Sam Adams and Washing-

ton for proposing the ultra-atheistic and most ungodly idea of separating the church from the state which these deists dared do, to the consternation of all the royal heads of Europe and the godly one in Rome.

In 1776, for Americans, this separation of state and religion is permissible, at least retroactively. But in 1976 it is "suppression of religion" everywhere else. Tories never die. Whitney, like the CIA, hopes that the future "liberation" of Lithuania will start with its priests. But today's Lithuanian priests know better. When I interviewed them one summer years ago, these Lithuanian priests had only hard words to say about those 300 priests who deserted their flocks, and harder words for those among them who helped the Nazis wipe out the Jewish population of Vilnius!

The truth is that when people are not socially or otherwise pressured into observing religious practices, they tend spontaneously to "forget" them, to become non- or a-religious. This is a world-wide phenomenon, as true in Lithuania as in the U.S.A.

With people free to attend church or not to attend church in Lithuania, religion found its true level. I had visited then and many times since the Shrine of Mater Misericordiae, in Vilnius. Above the altar and along the entire wall are fixed silver replicas of arms, legs, hearts and heads. The money to pay for these silver replicas of injured or sick parts of the bodies were contributed by past believers, desperately ill, who were then advised that God would surely cure them. This was the level of medicine in the not-too-distant past, and even now the priests do not refuse such "contributions" and do not take many pains to explain to their supplicants that the church is a healer of souls, not necessarily of tooth-aches.

"Pope's Polish Trip Has Stirred Lithuanians" read the headline to the article which Whitney wrote (August 7, 1979, as published in the *Herald Tribune*): "In Lithuania, many (how-many?) people go to church more as an affirmation of historical loyalty to traditions (my God, what does that mean?) that the Soviet authorities have tried to suppress (when? how?) and the church seems weak and demoralized." How then has the Pope—an agile cook—managed to "stir" them (all of them?). Appa-

rently, headline writers don't even read the articles they're supposed to head-line.

Journalists who comment on religion in the socialist world, and particularly in Lithuania, are careful to make a wide detour around the question of how priests behaved during the Nazi occupation. Pope Pius XII has gone down in history as having refused to lift a finger to save men and women—Jews and non-Jews alike—from the Nazis, though he was well aware of their impending fate. The history of the church in Lithuania is no more honorable. One year after Lithuania had chosen to become socialist, steps had already been taken to separate the church from the state, and the Catholic Church in Lithuania saw in these first actions of the young socialist state, a foreshadowing of its future weakened role. When the brown plague crossed the borders, already stained in the blood of Lithuanian children, there were some among the clergy who welcomed it with open arms and a benedictory raised finger. If one is in the mood, and feels generous enough, one can see that elements of a dilemma existed for the church. That "dilemma" existed for everyone who felt that his property or privileges were threatened by socialism. But the "cure" for socialism was certainly not Nazism, though in choosing Nazism they proved that, for them, it was the "lesser" evil. It only killed, it didn't take away your property!

So delighted were these priests at the efficiency with which the nazis got rid of the "Reds" that they couldn't hear the shrieks of agony of the 60,000 Jews who wereslain at Panevežys, which is not so far away from Vilnius, as Buchenwald is not so far from Weimar, that a sensitive ear could not hear them!

The church wanted to rule not merely souls but the bodies in which the souls nested. Priests had had great political power in Lithuania. The church had run the schools. The church owned vast lands and expropriated the wealth produced on them by workers who, no longer legally serfs, nevertheless remained serfs in fact.

When the Soviet Army cleared Lithuania of the brown plague, the Nazis fled and with them fled 300 priests. Why? But 600 remained. Why? A priest gave me the answers. They ran because they were afraid—that's true. But not because they were priests.

But because they had been collaborators, even murderers themselves, some of them. They fled because they feared the widows and orphans they left behind would tear their eyes out!

With the war over, the church found itself in a country that was totally devastated, physically. But also, from its point of view, spiritually. For the simple fact was that young people turned away from the church. Young men did not hear its call which had sounded so clearly before but instead responded to the call of socialism. There was work—good, creative work—to be done, and every normal, healthy human being responds to such a call. But not in the church.

Actually, after the war, the state did not move against the church. A *modus vivendi* was established, the essence of which was that the church would remain separated from the state, but the state would see to it that conditions existed for the church to continue to function. This included supplying materials for repairs. Young priests could be trained (when I visited a seminary in Kaunas, one of the subjects acolytes studied was . . . Marxism-Leninism!). But as long as the Church confined itself to its true function—servicing the religious needs of believers—there was no reason why there should be friction between it and the state. In the struggle for peace the church has an appropriate and honorable role to play. When it violates its own characters and takes a direct part in politics—politics which undermine the building of socialism—then it has to expect to be dealt politics back. Fortunately, most church leaders have come to understand that.

Though pretending to see movement where little movement was, those American commentators who yearned to see Catholicism make a come-back in Lithuania were quite complacent about the fact that it was in deep crisis in America. Just one figure: "The number of U.S. priests had plunged 67 percent in a decade, to 14,998, and too few young priests now are coming out of seminaries to replace the older priests who entered the church..."* and those young priests coming out of seminaries are calling for profound reforms in Catholic practice, and are often to be seen on picket-lines in front of the expensive

* *U.S. News & World Report*, October 15, 1979.

Gothic castles of their bishops and cardinals, dressed in blue jeans, and calling for an end to celibacy for priests, among other things.

Pope John stirred up a hornet's nest among the Catholic clergy in the U.S.A. In Lithuania, he stirred up, and only in the breasts of the aging die-hards, pale ghosts of hopes long ago withered.

The majority and continuing opinion, however, of Lithuanian priests was expressed to me years ago by a priest from Kaunas, Father Pranas Smutkas. He said: "Though I am not personally responsible for what went on during the last five years of Smetona's regime* because I was only an ordinary parish priest, it is nevertheless hard for me to state that such social problems as large families, care in case of sickness and old age, social security, and similar things, were solved in our Fatherland not by us Catholics (who had state power—*P.B.*) but by the Bolsheviks."

I had met with the old artist, Antanas Žmuidzinavičius, who was then 90 years old, whose lifelong collection of devils had been the hobby which eventually became a unique museum. Situated in his house in Kaunas right behind the Čiurlionis Museum, the glass cases of devils came from not only Lithuania but from countries all over the world. Žmuidzinavičius died in 1966, but his collection remains. It is this collection of devils which the bourgeois journalists noted in their stories—only this!

I take it to be symbolic. Žmuidzinavičius wanted to capture all the devils in the world and put them behind glass cases for tourists and visitors to gawk at. And he chose, with an impressive logic, socialist Lithuania in which to jail the devil forever.

* A. Smetona, head of the fascist regime in bourgeois Lithuania. In 1940, when the popular movement was mounting, he fled to Germany. After the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II he fled to the U.S.A. and there headed the "Lithuanian government in exile" that was fully subsidized by the Americans.—*Ed.*

A TOUCH OF UKRAINE

—“It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak, and another to hear.”

David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*...

About five million people were killed in the Ukraine during World War II. Over two million were forcibly driven to Germany as slave labor, or shoved into concentration camps, out of which few emerged. And, as the Nazis retreated toward that last bunker in Berlin, where Hitler was going insane with terror, they destroyed everything they could: 16,000 factories, 28,000 collective farms, hundreds of cities, along with their schools, hospitals, cats and dogs and sunflowers.

And they killed millions of trees.

More than five hundred thousand Ukrainian partisans fought them every inch of the way.

Today (1980) the population of the Ukraine stands at slightly under 50 million. But to show how long human destruction persists, 54.4 percent of the Ukrainian population today, 35 years after the war, are women. This sexual imbalance creates social problems that are a constant reminder that the misery of war does not end when hostilities end.

Jews died. But it is a monstrous injustice to the Jews themselves to pretend that they alone died. Enormous losses were suffered during the war by other nationalities as well. Nevertheless, though the damage was devastating, the Ukraine has not only made up for what was destroyed but has gone on beyond—far beyond. It has changed dramatically.

Today, 60 percent of the people live in cities, 40 percent in the countryside, which is itself being “urbanized.” Before the war, the percentages were reversed: 34 percent lived in cities, 66 percent in the countryside. Of the Ukraine’s 50 million population, about 75 percent are native Ukrainians, about 20 percent

are Russians, and the rest are distributed among 100 different nationalities. One-half of today's population was born since the war. And, of course, known as the bread-basket of the U.S.S.R., the Ukraine raises a great deal of wheat.

These are important figures, and one should not slide by them. They show a great deal about the human spirit. They show, for instance, that today's Ukraine is more distinctly Ukrainian, without being nationalist, than it has ever been in its 1,500-year history.

At the same time never has its population been so young, so well-educated, so profoundly integrated into socialism. For millions of Ukrainians, socialism is as natural as the air they breathe, and they, like millions of other Soviet citizens, take for granted their long array of social rights and privileges which most of the world is still only dreaming of.

The Ukraine is now an industrial-agricultural socialist republic. As with all Soviet republics, it has long ago solved the profound social problems that still beset the West of the non-socialist world.

In this connection, it is worth recalling Lenin's words: "Given united action by the Great-Russian and Ukrainian proletarians, a free Ukraine *is possible*; without such unity, it is out of the question."

Women are completely liberated—not U.S. middle-class—"liberated," but really liberated. They are normal women. In fact, instead of losing their femininity as the price of equality, they have more fully freed their femininity without becoming quasi-males.

Cities have been turned into places where people *live*. Is that news? Yes, it is. For most Western industrial cities, until very recently, existed not for people but as places where proletarians were herded as reserves to supply factories and the "satanic mills" with "hands." Such cities were geared to meet the needs of capitalism; they produced and produce slums, crime, poverty and disease.

Socialist cities, in the Ukraine and elsewhere, are cultural centers, first of all, built for the people and not against them. Factories are generally located on the city's outskirts or even farther into the country. Measures to keep the air and water un-

polluted are universal now. Problems exist, but they are problems that yield to planning.

Everywhere in the Soviet Union, and the Ukraine is no exception, you find avid book-readers. Annually 8-9 thousand different titles are published by Ukrainian publishers in more than 150 million copies. (However, such statistics make bourgeois commentators sick to the stomach.) Books of Russian and non-Russian writers are regularly translated and put out in large editions. An average Ukrainian knows more about American classics than does an average American.

There are about 1,000 writers (to be classified as a "writer" eligible for membership in the Writers' Union, one must have published at least two books), 2,000 painters, more than 2,000 newspapers with a combined circulation of about 25 million, mostly in the Ukrainian language. There are 11.7 million TV sets, 162 national museums, 3,000 local museums, 78 theaters, and to make sure these national theaters are regularly replenished with new talent, there are 4 million amateur artists of all sorts in the whole Ukraine.

More: a 12-volume encyclopedia about the Ukraine has gone into its 2nd edition.

There are millions of people in this republic who are studying— young and old and middle-aged. Everybody is studying something. Nobody, or almost nobody, sits around letting time go by as he grows older.

The Communist Party of the Ukraine was founded with Lenin's help in 1918, and today has 2,800,000 members. Of these 43.2 percent are workers, 16.2 percent are farmers, 40.6 percent are "intelligentsia" (which includes engineers and scientists, art workers and doctors, etc., most of whom come from the working class and peasants). The majority of the party members are Ukrainians—65.8 percent; 27.3 percent are Russians; and other nationalities make up the rest.

There are 6 million Komsomols, who are kids from the age of 14 to their mid-twenties, and who, earlier, had been Pioneers, of whom there are many millions, for they constitute just about the entire pre-teen-age population.

Absent from Ukrainian life, in cities and countryside both, are violent gangs, organized criminals, prostitution rings, drug

syndicates and so on—that whole list of Dantean agonies the West is only too familiar with.

And if that's so—if one can say with full confidence that here are a people better-educated than ever before, healthier and obviously happier, cultured, with living standards rising from year to year, where all races and nationalities live in peace side by side—why then doesn't the world stop and cry Hallelujah and do handsprings of joy?

After all, the scourges of society which have been with us for centuries—poverty, diseases of poverty, crime, the alienation of the spirit, violence—have been eliminated for the first time in man's entire existence. Why, then, aren't they delighted about it in New York, Washington, Rome, Paris, London and West Berlin?

The answer is simple. Yes, Soviet people read—but they read Marxist works, or “good” literature. We want them to read pornography, sex and murder mysteries, and until they are “free” to do so we shall hold back our approval and give it instead to those mutants who are called “dissidents” but who are closer to our kidney.

If we had our way—so goes the mumbled prayers in the martini glass—*they'd* be in power—and socialism would be flooded with pornography, which we would call “freedom to read,” child prostitution, which we would call a “personal choice,” slums, films that eat out your brain like the drugs simultaneously do, every child would have his “pusher” in every schoolyard—and that would be what *we* would recognize as freedom, as long as we also had a White House, a Congress, a Supreme Court and Chase National Bank.

Useless, therefore, to cite figures that you consider proof that a social order morally superior to ours has been established (at great sacrifice). Not until we can count on crime in the streets will we be sure that “democracy” has come back to the Soviet Ukraine.

And, grotesque as that sounds, they mean it. History has probably known no gang of cut-throats more brutal, more savage—beyond all hitherto known limits of savagery—than the gang of Ukrainian nationalists who today infest America and Canada with their presence.

Last seen in the Ukraine, they were putting the torch to Ukrainian villages, hanging women, children and men to lampposts, shooting down everything that moved, and when the Soviet Army appeared on the horizon, they left hastily with the German Nazis, into West Germany, and then, by a process of political pasteurization, which has been patented in Washington, they emerged on Columbia's shores as "democrats."

Well, not really. They hate democracy, believe it's the first stage of Communism, and can't stand the hypocrisy with which America—blood-brothers under the democratic skin as they are—surrounds their bloody images.

To them, "nationalists," the problem is simple: the world is under the heel of atheistic Communism. The solution to the problem is equally simple: bomb them!

And they've said so more than once. They would rather that the Ukraine be a desert than on it people should pay no more than three percent of their income for rent!

Of the three million Ukrainians who live abroad, mostly in the U.S.A., Canada, and in Latin America, only a handful are actually enrolled in the three main Ukrainian emigré groups, living off CIA money, who are active.

There is the Ukrainian OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists), and the forces behind the Bandera and Melnikov groups, who vie with each other for leadership of the Ukrainian fascist and nationalist movement. There are some monarchists also drifting in the winds, and a handful of splinter groups.

But, objectively—let's not mince words, there's too little time in the world—they're insane. Most Ukrainian Americans and Canadians smell that insanity in them, and keep their distance, especially American- and Canadian-born second generations. The fanatical hatred of their fathers for their homeland repels the sons and daughters, and even though they may know nothing true about their fathers' "homeland," and are satisfied to be just ordinary American and Canadian citizens sharing the assimilated standard anti-Communism which is the common inheritance of the majority of born North Americans, still they see no reason why they have to become single-tracked fanatics, pathologically locked into that position as the main direction of their lives.

They sense in this fanaticism the guns of World War III—

and many of them already, in America, had seen war on the battlefields of Korea and Vietnam and had had enough of it. The ultras make no bones about their hopes that détente will sink and war will burst over the world. Like the Maoists, whom they have lately recognized as brothers-in-crime, they talk about a new beautiful world, a "Free Ukraine", rising from the ashes of the present one.

Trying to pervert, undermine, destabilize Socialist Ukraine is an obsession with them, and they wrack their brains for ways and means of smuggling lurid literature into the country, for ways of making contact with, hopefully, weak or already corrupted citizens, and regularly the Ukrainian customs officials uncover pamphlets and papers in the false bottoms of innocent-looking suitcases, or tucked inside the even falser bosoms of traveling female "tourists." The literature usually reveals total ignorance of Ukrainian life. It reflects not Ukrainian reality, but the frenzied hopes and dreams that cook in already over-cooked brains.

From England, for example, in 1977 a certain young "tourist," in his early 20s, still wet behind the ears, came to the Ukraine ostensibly to see the sights. As the son of a fanatical Ukrainian Nationalist—actually a former sergeant for the Nazi SS *Galiziën*—he had been pumped full of hysterical anti-Sovietism since he was born (in England) and had been conned into accepting a Quixotic mission (à la James Bond). His ex-Nazi father had assured him that all he need do is show his face in the Ukraine, throw some pamphlets around and the entire Ukrainian people would rise as one and follow him to "freedom." He himself had been brought up in England (where his father had run to save his skin when Hitler collapsed) as a junior member of the Banderite Ukrainian Youth Association, modeled on Hitler's *jugend*, and it seemed to him, in his befuddled mind, that there wasn't anything to it—he'd show up in the Ukraine as a romantic secret agent and, since it was no shucks at all to fool the Communists (he had seen TV!), he'd certainly get by the dunderheaded customs officials with those micro-films of anti-Soviet propaganda in his hollow elevator heels, his clothes stuffed with tens of thousands of rubles (where'd he get them?), and his mind stuffed with nonsense.

He was picked up immediately (was that intended by his father?) and in the cold light of reality, he almost lost what little he had left of his mind as he realized the trap he'd fallen into. Was he ready to spend years in jail because he wore hollow heels on his shoes? His hosts, unexpectedly, took him around to show him the sights of Kiev and even to visit an aunt of his, and to his shocked amazement he saw—not the lurid Ukraine of his father's tales, a Ukraine sunk in poverty and groaning under the heel of the Russian oppressor—but a beautiful, modern city, in which the people lived quite well, and as for his aunt—she, too, lived quite well, though she wasn't flattered by his visit.

Poor boy. He was victimized not by the Communists but by his own father! What to do? So he did it. He begged the Soviet government to let him go. He realized what a fool he'd been and how misled—would they take pity on his youth and forgive him, let him go?

They did. His name: Andrei Klymchuk. He returned home to Britain, and true to his word, at the airport in London he repeated what he had already confessed in Kiev—he'd been duped.

But those hard-bitten, older anti-Sovieteers had wanted to make a martyr of him. They never grew wiser. For many of them the last view they had of their "beloved" homeland was towns burning, put to the torch by themselves and their friends the Nazis, and the last they had seen of their neighbors was their dead bodies sprawled in the ditches, or swinging from a home-made gallows in the bitter wind.

Fond memories! They want them back again.

REALITIES AND POEMS IN STEEL

“The blast-furnace and the puddling-furnace, the loup-lump at the bottom of the melt at last, the rolling-mill, the stumpy bars of pig-iron, the strong clean-shaped T-rail for railroads. . .

In them realities for you and me, in them poems
for you and me,
In them, not yourself—you and your soul enclose all
things, regardless of estimation,
In them the development good—in them all themes,
hints, possibilities.”

Walt Whitman, *A Song of Occupations*

Come with me to Lipetsk, and visit with me in this steel city, south of Moscow, the 400,000 people who—as far as I could find out—don’t have a worry in the world.

Let me correct that. Yes, of course they have worries. But, if you’re an American, not *your* worries. Here I’m speaking of steelworkers from Baltimore, Bethlehem, Youngstown, Gary, Western Pennsylvania. . .

Put everything you’ve ever heard of about the Soviet Union to one side, and take a look with me at one of the U.S.S.R.’s typical steel mills.

Much of what you’ll hear you’ll recognize because some things are the same the whole world over. But there is much you will not. And you’ll be tempted to say I’m lying.

I’m not. This is the truth as I saw it, listened to it, felt it. I know it’s the truth all the more certainly because I know what the truth about the life of steelworkers is. My father worked his whole life in a steel mill, I worked some, my four brothers at one time or another did, and even my sister worked in a steel mill—the Fontana Steel in California—during World War II. We’ve breathed, eaten and lived steel. And none of us—particularly my father—made more than a bare living (in good times: my father started work in the steel mills when the work day was 12 hours long and the hourly pay was 25 cents) working in the steel mills.

The first question I asked Ivan Francenuk, a man about 45,

who is the general director of the Novolipetsk Steel Mill was: "You introduced new techniques here lately, I understand, including the installation of two BOF's (Basic Oxygen Furnaces). How many workers did you fire?"

"What do you mean?"

"How many workers did you fire—these furnaces make production more efficient. You don't need as many workers."

"We didn't fire anybody. In fact, we don't use the word 'fire.'"

"What do you mean, you didn't fire anybody? Aren't workers replaced by new machines, new technique?"

"Yes. But we don't fire them."

"What do you do?"

"We re-train them. At our expense. We don't get rid of them. It's a barbaric thought. Anyhow, we always need workers. We're short of workers."

Actually, some people do get what we in America call "fired." There is no perfection even in heaven—that's where the fallen angel Lucifer came from, heaven. There are cases of individuals who for one reason or another, won't do their work right, or even more important, do it so badly that they endanger their own or somebody else's life or limb. After warnings, if they don't shape up, these people are fired.

Mostly, workers work well and live well. Much better than you do. Not because they have more knick-knacks around the house—you may have one or two *things* more than they—but they have the kind of security and confidence in their jobs and lives that you—if you're a typical American worker—can only dream of.

I had a long session with the general director of the Novolipetsk plant and his staff, and I threw all kinds of questions at them, some of which clearly puzzled them, for to tell the truth, coming from capitalist America is like coming from Mars and some of the things you tell or ask people here, which are very normal for America, absolutely stymie them.

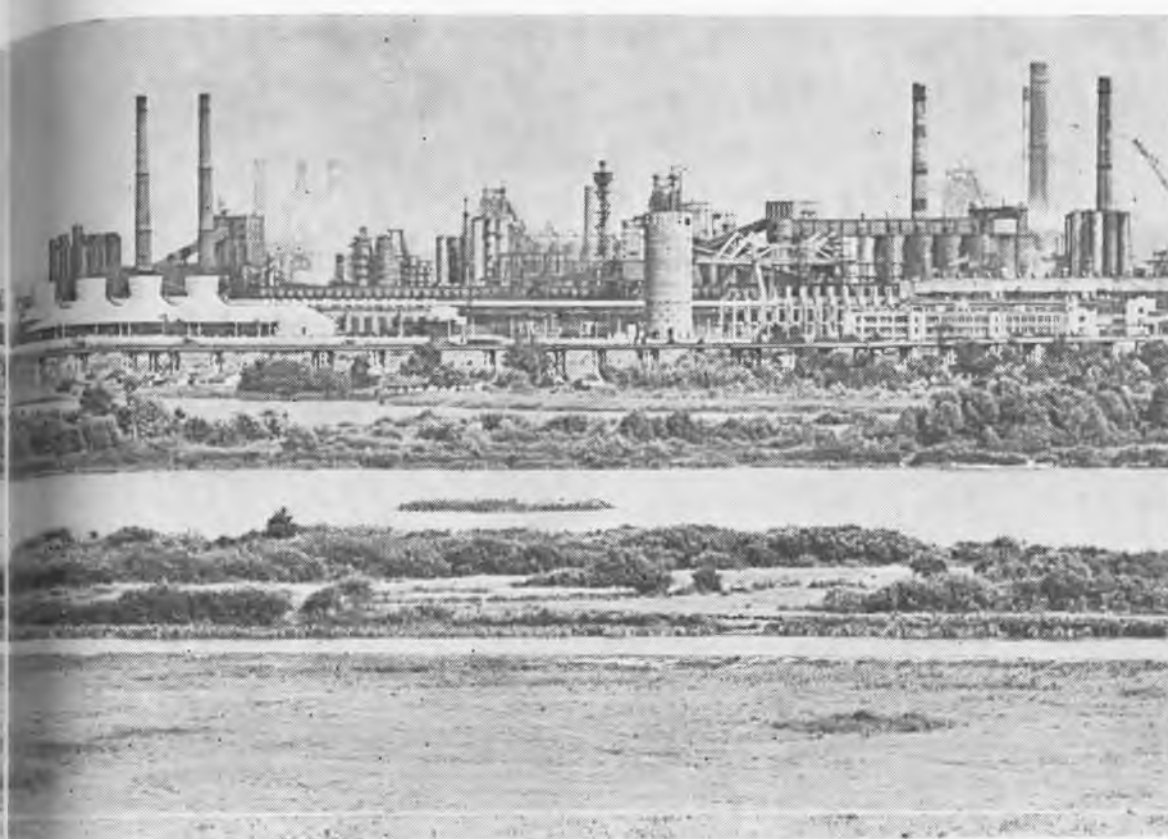
For instance: unemployment.

They knew, of course, the abstract meaning of "unemployment." After all, they have dictionaries. But, in their gut, they really didn't understand it, not even remotely as an American understands it with no words and pictures needing to be drawn.

THE STEELWORKERS OF LIPETSK



Blast furnace operators



The Novolipetsk Iron-and-Steel Works

A new steelworkers' residential development



Lipetsk steelworkers' sports complex
Sukhoborye holiday home of the Novolipetsk Steel Works in
the heart of a pine grove

They don't have unemployment and haven't had it in their entire lifetime.

Which brings up a peculiar situation. For when you ask them if they have unemployment compensation, their answer is: "No."

For the bourgeois correspondent, this would have been all they heard, all they wanted to hear: no unemployment compensation for workers in the Soviet Union! And that would have been no lie. But what they would have "forgotten" to explain is that there's no unemployment compensation for workers in the U.S.S.R. because there's never any unemployment!

"Yes," the director told me, "we've heard that such things happen in your country. But the last man in our country who was unemployed was unemployed in—" He couldn't remember.

Actually, the last man who was unemployed in the U.S.S.R.—which was in 1930—was still alive, though retired. I had met his daughter at the Second Watch Factory in Moscow.

So, no unemployed. Nobody fired. (For someone, like myself, who, when I was a steel worker, had been laid off his job several times because work had slackened, this was news that made me pick up my ears.)

"How, if you can't hold the threat of firing over a man's head, do you make him work? If they know they won't be fired—" I asked a worker later inside the Mill. "If *you* know you won't get fired except for extreme irresponsibility, why do you put in an honest day's work?"

His name was Stanislav Polyakoff, married, one child, started work in 1966.

He said: "I was brought up to work honestly."

That's it. He has a working-class conscience. He knows he's working not for a boss, not for a U.S. steel corporation and coupon chippers, but for *himself*—that is, for everybody, which means himself, too. And the proof of it is everywhere.

I visited the home of another worker, Anatoli Gagarin (no relation, he explained, to the famous cosmonaut who was the first to go into outer space). His home is a three-room apartment, nothing special, but quite pleasant and livable. Decent-sized kitchen you can work and eat in, with all the facilities. Living-room with color TV, bedroom with pleasant furniture, a room

for the 18-year-old boy who was in the army. His wife, as it happens, also works in the mill: a crane driver. She's 43, in two years, will be retired on full pension (for length of service and kind of work).^{*} He, too, will retire in two years. They have a car, drove to Austria one summer—she took a vacation in Italy by herself one summer—and are mulling over what to do now that retirement is so close.

They don't intend to sit home and watch TV. Meanwhile, for their apartment, which would cost *you*, if you rented it, or even if you were paying on a mortgage, up to 25 to 35 percent of your monthly income, costs *them* about 17 rubles a month, which is no more than about 3 percent of *their* income, which together, comes to 600 to 700 rubles monthly.

We talk. They ask me questions about America, and in trying to give them a picture of America, I find, as was true with the two boys in the hospital, that we don't speak the same language at all, and not just because they speak Russian and I English.

If you tell them about crime, it goes past their glazed eyes. They don't know what you're talking about, though they understand your words. If you tell them about prices, insecurity, fear of going out at night if you live in a city—none of this registers. They do understand talk about good clothes, cars, variety of foods, etc., however, for this, too, is what they either already have or expect to have tomorrow.

When I told Gagarin something about the anxiety of workers in Baltimore that they might be fired as a result of the modernisation of steel plants there, he could only shake his head and say: "I sympathize."

Problems? Of course there are problems. The only place where there aren't any problems is in the graveyard. But they are different problems from the problems Americans have to struggle with. For the Soviet workers the problem is not to get health

^{*} In the U.S.S.R. at present white and blue-collar workers and collective farmers are entitled to old-age pensions on reaching the age of sixty—in the case of men, and fifty-five in the case of women. For those working underground, in hot shops or in difficult labor conditions the qualifying age is 5-10 years lower.—*Ed.*

insurance some day. They have it. Their problem is how to *improve* the health services. Their problem is not to get job security. They have it. Their problem is to improve on-job performance. Their problem is not getting or holding a job but putting out constantly. It's not 100 percent possible to keep people up to the mark every day and all the time. For instance, last year there were 699 cases of absenteeism at the Mill—usually for a single day. But that added up to a considerable loss, which was reflected in the size of their bonus. Because everyone suffers when one man isn't up to the mark, the tendency is for all workers to take on the responsibility for keeping the backslider from sliding.

Novolipetsk Metallurgical Plant is very modern. It has five high-capacity blast furnaces, two basic oxygen furnaces, electric steel-melting shops, three rolling mills, a sintering plant, a by-product coke plant. It makes iron, strips, electrical steel, hot-rolled sheets, and many other things, shipped all over the world. In December, 1979, Armco, with its Japanese partner, Nippon Steel, concluded a huge 353 million dollar deal to construct another electrical steel plant in Novolipetsk. This deal was meant not only to underline that it's possible and profitable to do business with the Soviet Union but that you had to have peace for it, too. Armco's chairman, William Verity, had long opposed the Carter Administration's policy of using trade as a political weapon, and as co-chairman of the American-Soviet Trade and Economic Council, he has lobbied for the elimination of all restrictive trade barriers between the two countries.*

One of the plant's BOF's is equipped with a 160-ton furnace and works with continuous vertical steel casters. Incidentally, this mill pioneered the continuous casting processing system, later adopted by steel mills everywhere.

All processes are automated, and the search for ever newer, more economical, higher productive methods and means goes on constantly. The mill has its own research department where

* The deal, under Carter's prodding, was cancelled later—only to be picked up by the Creusot-Loire industrial group of France. The French government ignored Carter's protests. The only losers were the Japanese and American companies, and the loss ran into the millions.

experiments are conducted daily. Environmental considerations play a central role in planning. They already have a closed-cycle water system and an almost complete smoke-control system in operation.

When an American visitor (who had been there just the day before I came) asked whether you could catch fish in the Voronezh River, which runs through the city, and supplies the plant with water, they had to take him to the river itself and actually catch a fish before his eyes, cook it and eat it to prove it was clean!

The skeptic was Paul Piccirilli, from the United Steelworkers of America, Local Union 1211, from Aliquippa, who headed a small tourist group of other workers visiting Lipetsk. According to the Lipetsk—or Novolipetsk where the plant is actually located—steelmen who dealt with Piccirilli and the others, the American visitors said they were surprised not only at the efficiency of the mill, but like all American visitors, by the range of social services and benefits the steelworkers got.

The mill makes an annual profit of between 150 and 170 million rubles. Profit? Yes, of course. When you put your labor into something, the idea is to make that something more valuable than it was before—ore dust, coke and limestone are turned into iron, and with further help, into steel. That's more valuable than when the original ingredients are taken separately or together. But the important thing is, who gets the profit?

Half of it goes to the state, and that returns in services only the state can perform. But half stays with the mill. Out of its half, the mill finances modernization and machine repairs and maintenance, which comes to about 15-20 percent annually. But annual bonuses for workers come to a hefty 15 percent. And the rest goes to finance vacations (they build their own pioneer camps and sanatoria), maternity leaves for women, housing (they build new houses for their workers), sports facilities, hospitals, rest homes, libraries—all for the steelworkers and their families. These facilities are administered by their trade union.

I would go visit two of them—and in visiting them I will also learn why there's so little juvenile delinquency in Lipetsk. But before going, let's have a meal in the plant canteen. This is your big meal of the day. For 50 or 60 kopeks, you can have a thick

soup, salad, meat, potatoes and vegetable, bread and butter, tea or compote (a fruit combination drink). When you come home from work your evening meal is your light meal. That will be most likely pre-cooked meats or cold cuts, a salad, and tea and cake. Most of it can be picked up on your way home from the local shop. It doesn't represent much of a burden to prepare, nor is it expensive. Breakfasts are usually eaten at home. Your child at school gets his midday meal there either free or for a few kopeks. So, too, your wife where she works. Cooking at home can be—if it's one's choice—reduced to a minimum, though Russians are famous for their thick soups and borsch, which take a lot of time to prepare.

The plant has all kinds of facilities for the use of its workers and their families: a sports complex in which there is a basketball court, swimming pool, rooms for chess players, weight-lifters, a rifle range, an outside track for runners, a football (soccer) field. In the middle of town they have a first-class sports arena with an artificial ice-rink. When I was there two teams of teenagers were playing on the ice. About 1,000 kids daily take advantage of the facilities this arena has. For free. Some 60 groups function here, learning not only how to skate for hockey but how to become figure skaters and speed racers as well. Ballets and circuses are performed on ice. Adults too use the facilities, which cost 3 million to build and 1,500 rubles a day to maintain.

When I watched those teen-agers smacking the puck around I couldn't see them standing on the street corners wondering where to go, what to do. They were too busy, too involved, to get into teen-age trouble. They know, too, once they've grown up, they can either go to work in the mill, which isn't a bad choice at all, or go to study further. Kids in cities like Lipetsk have to work at it to go wrong. They have to really want to—be dedicated. Otherwise, they're too busy and interested to be doing anything else. But, of course, nothing's ever perfect, and there are kids who get themselves into trouble, but it's *trouble*, not rebellion, nor a case of "alienation", nor any other maladies affecting Western youth.

The facility which impressed me most was the Prometheus Pioneer camp. Situated about half an hour's ride into the pine-smelling country, this "camp" is actually unique in that it's

really a kind of rest home, a sanatorium and health center all rolled into one.

It functions all year round, but in the summer it serves mainly as a vacation camp for children. But when I was there it was early in the year—May. Why were children here in May?

These children, running around, playing games, were here for a good reason: to keep them from getting seriously ill. If your child starts moping around the house, has no energy, looks like he's about to come down with something, loses his interest in school or even play, and yet "nothing's really wrong with him"—you send him here to make sure nothing *will* be wrong with him.

For these symptoms are recognized as the pre-conditions for serious possible ailments later. The children are built up here—their resistance is strengthened, they are fed special diets, and they follow a prescribed regimen for their special needs, and at the same time they go to school here, they live as much as possible in the open air, which itself, among all the pine trees, is healing, and when they're back in good shape again, they're sent home. *All* children—yours, mine, the folk's down the street. Nominal charge, the bill footed mainly by your trade union.

You could not afford this kind of preventive health service in America unless you were a millionaire. Here everyone's a "millionaire." All they need do to rate it is be the child of a steelworker. (Other unions also provide similar services.)

I was quite surprised that this obviously very expensive facility existed at all. And when I mentioned my surprise that they were putting out so much money just to keep kids from getting sick, they were surprised at my surprise.

"But it's for the children!"

Nothing more was necessary.

Drive through this city—or any other city in the whole Soviet Union—and try to figure out by looking at the houses—using David Shipler's famous "on the basis of visual evidence alone," where the "rich" lived, the "poor," the "middle-class," the minorities, the Soviet equivalent of Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, people on Welfare, etc. Guess where the "safe" or "dangerous" areas are. You can't do it. There is no "poor" section in any Soviet city where the "poor" live. No "safe," no "dangerous,"

There are no "poor" in our sense, nor anybody living on Welfare, and though there are "minorities," that's not a fault, nor a crime, nor a misfortune, and there's no place where they're all shoved, "across the tracks," "in the Hollow," in the slums, or anywhere else special. Jews live here too, and five of them head departments in the mill, and none of them is interested in Israel. A doctor can live side by side with a street-cleaner. And a street-cleaner, or his child, can become a doctor. No reason why not.

Some visitors from capitalist countries usually come to sniff, and peer, and poke around to see if they can smoke out secret blights and social misery. This is because they're used to that at home, used to the fact that misery is swept out of sight under the carpet. But though problems exist here, these problems are connected with growth, and next year these problems will have been solved and new ones will take their place. One year the problem was to get an apartment; the following year the problem was to get a better one. And the following year—better still. This is how it goes.

And why not?

Nobody in the West bothers to ask that question. If they're free to do so, why *won't* people do the best they can for themselves?

The only difference between people under capitalism and people under socialism is that in the West people also try to do the best for themselves—but it's for *themselves* that they do it. Let the devil take the hindmost. And in the end the devil gets most of them.

Under socialism, the best for themselves is the best for everyone.

As an old woman (not so old at that) said to me once: When your hand goes from the table to your mouth, that means you're no more than an animal. When your hand also replaces what you consumed for the next fellow—then that shows you're now a civilized human being.

That's the law of socialism.

I GO TO SCHOOL...

“Corporal punishment of schoolchildren by their teachers was declared Constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.”

News item

It's September 1, 1978, and I went to school today—along with 40 million others, mostly kids. The school I went to is in my neighborhood, hidden among trees. It is a 10-year school in the Sverdlovsk district. Some 506 children, from 7 to 17, gathered at a quarter to nine in the schoolyard to hear a welcoming speech from the principal. All the first-graders carried bouquets of flowers. Their faces shone, the blue serge suits of the boys were gleaming new, the white-aproned pinafores of the girls were also as new. The girls' hair was caught in braids and they wore ribbons in it. Most of the children were Pioneers, their red scarfs floating in the small breeze.

There had been a trumpet call, some brass band music, speeches, and then, the young new students ceremoniously accompanied by boys and girls in their last year, filed solemnly into the school to which they would probably go until they, too, finally graduated 10 years later.

It is a solemn occasion. This day, the opening of the school year, is probably—after Victory Day, May Day and November 7, the anniversary of Revolution—the most important day in the Soviet calendar.

The whole country pauses to take a look at its children. TV announces the fact. Radio speaks of it. The newspapers devote special stories and even editorials to it. At home, Mama and Papa, despite themselves, are excited, older Petyas and Anyas, looking at their younger brother and sister, feel for the first time in their young lives the actual passing of time. They are already *old*. Someone is younger than they are! It makes them feel serious.

Parents had come to see their children begin the school year. Most of the kids had been away all summer at camp, or the older ones had worked on collective farms or on construction sites. Moscow had been strangely quiet during the hot summer months.

Now they were back—tanned, taller, healthier, without doubt the *healthiest* children in the world, physically, morally and mentally.

If you could travel across the time-zones of this country, following the sun from Vladivostok westward to, say, Vilnius, this day would look like an unfolding scarf of flowers. Beginning in the East while the West is still asleep, children start trooping to school holding in their hands roses or chrysanthemums, gladioli or hollyhocks. As one time-zone falls behind, another comes to life—still more children, with shining morning faces and bouquets of flowers are on their way to school. By the time children in Western Soviet Union are waking, children in Vladivostok have finished their first day of school.

This day is a ritual, an act of faith, a reconsecration to learning. There is a need for learning—a direct connection between learning and life. These children (as in other socialist countries) are the only children in history who will study the real world and the laws of its being on purely scientific principles.

The October Revolution of 1917 opened the doors for them and provided them with the curricula. They will graduate 10 years later, free of prejudice, of mysticism, and of self-doubt. They will be, from every point of view, the best-educated, most fully-liberated, young people in the world. For what they will learn in school will be verified for them in life. These children are the only children since history began who are told the truth.

Tatyana Ivanovna Petrakova is only 25. This happens to be her first year as principal of this or any school, and she looks as young and pretty as the oldest girl students there. The previous principal is there, too. She had just retired at 55, but obviously hasn't stopped working. She is there this morning along with representatives of the public, war-time partisans with their rows of medals, a representative of the school's patron factory—the Factory of Communards—and parents.

The parents and public representatives take their responsibilities seriously. I feel their concern as I talk to them. But even more than the questions and answers that are exchanged between us is the feeling I get that I can sit and talk with these women and men from now till doomsday and they'll never understand the questions I ask them nor why I do nor the world from which I come armed with such questions.

Two worlds pass by in broad daylight as though it's the darkest of nights!

For instance, I ask the principal what problems of discipline she encounters. (She had been vice-principal before.) Did she, for instance, have children who drank, smoked pot, sold or bought drugs, carried knives or guns, sneaked pornographic books into the classroom, and, at some time or other during the year, would a fellow-student or teacher be assaulted with a deadly weapon by one of the students?

When I present them—sitting as we all are in the principal's room—with this grocery list of what is not too unusual in American schools, they look at me in dead silence. Then, with a helpless shake of their head, they'll all say no, they never even heard of, let alone themselves seen, such things in any of their schools. They're not even sure that I'm not making some obscure joke.

In any case, when I ask them what are the typical disciplinary problems the average teacher encounters, the principal says faintly: "Smoking in toilets."

She's almost apologetic.

"Smoking in toilets? And that's it?"

Not only she but they all nod, a little helplessly, almost a little regretfully that they can't supply me with something more colorful. Compared to American schools, their schools certainly are dull.

As to drugs, pornography, alcohol, guns and knives—these things imply a world they do not know or even recognize. Such things are not only unheard-of in Soviet schools; they're unthinkable. And they cannot themselves visualize how one functions in an American school beset with such problems, nor why it should have been seriously suggested that teaching be classified as a hazardous occupation in the U.S.A.

I ask the principal: "In American schools, your schools are

pictured as totalitarian, where dissent is prohibited, where conformity is enforced, and so on. What's your answer to that?"

Later, I will look at a news report by Kevin Klose also describing opening school-day in Moscow. To this school he sends his three American-born children (and boasts that they are good students). However, ungrateful for the fact that he can go about his business slandering Soviet reality safe in the knowledge that his children will go to and from school, unmolested, certainly unraped, unmugged, unheld-up for money by fellow charmers (all of which happened in the school in the U.S.A. to students known to my daughter who was also a student in the same school, but who managed to escape unscathed), he slips in the capitalist line anyhow. Of course since he—and all capitalist-liners—are ashamed of admitting openly that they believe in capitalism (even President Carter's advisers called for a "paradigm" that would outflank the negative "private enterprise" image most people have come to loth), they adopt a vague "libertarian" language that can't be translated into Republican or Democrat or Democran or Republicrat.

Not an "unfolding scarf of flowers" is this day to him, but one in which "similar scenes were repeated in the grim industrial cities" from border to border.

Now, I've visited many of the industrial cities of the U.S.S.R. and whatever one's tastes may be in cities, "grim" Soviet cities are not. What they are are cities in which workers live. The sight of workers living anywhere is a "grim" sight to a middle-class snob, whose own plush living has been assured by the work of these workers in the "grim" cities. Such anti-working class snobs are always chauvinist, haters of every variety of minority (who are always in the working class), and, of course, anti-democratic. To pose as a judge of what people create through their sweat and blood is arrogance of a species that has become more and more typical of certain post-war Americans, whose feet have never touched the good earth. Lipetsk, for instance, is a Soviet industrial city which is green in summer, you can swim and fish in its river, and . . . but I've already described Lipetsk.

But Klose goes on to slander even the school system to which at the same time he trustingly surrenders his children. He manages to find something invidious in everything any normal per-

son would find to be either benign or even pretty good. In his zeal to smear everything, including the shadows on the wall, he commits the well-known mistake of overkill, which has become an "American" fault.

Why are there such good students in English? Well, *you* might think people study English because they want to learn a foreign language in order to gain entry into its literature and culture.

But not Mr. Klose! The reason why the Soviet Union spends untold amounts of money, trains numberless teachers and puts aside acres of schoolrooms to teach English (and other languages) is because: "School No. 5 specializes in teaching English as a foreign language, beginning in the second grade (unheard-of in the U.S.A.—*P.B.*) (for) the mastery of English can mean wide horizons for these children in later life. That is why the elite of Moscow try to send their children there, and why parents monitor their children's performance with a scrutiny that many Americans (how many?) would find unusual—" But that's not the end. "—if not suffocating."

In one or two swipes Mr. Klose who doesn't like working-class cities (and crowds) manages to twist what before the Age of Klose the whole world considered a remarkable educational feat into nothing more than a scheme to give a group of people called "the elite" a chance for "wider horizons"! To stick on this idiocy the picture of parents standing over their kids with a club, or whip, or whatever, as they study all night and are torn at dawn out of their beds by these same relentless parents who "monitor" their suffocated children!

Mr. Klose should have stayed home writing about Washington prostitutes!

But my principal was answering my last question: "At 12, children start to learn English here. We teach them that America is made up of mainly friendly people, who certainly want peace themselves, and we introduce them then to the best in American literature—the best books, Hemingway, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, John Steinbeck, and so on. As for our aims in education, they are to provide for the all-round development of the child who can actively participate in Soviet life, and who will continue to study either in a higher school or on his own when he leaves here."

Breakfasts and lunches (both costing only kopeks) are served at school. There are also after-school programs for children whose parents are still at work.

The first-graders will learn Russian, arithmetic, reading and writing and will attend a class, later, called "Preparation for Labor." Somebody might frown at that, but this is a country of the working class, in which everybody works. Children are not taught here how to get the advantage over other children—how to get into a position in society where they hire and fire, and the others learn how to accept a fate in which they are hired and fired.

So, as you leave this remarkable-unremarkable encounter with Soviet schoolchildren and teachers, who are actually in your back yard, and you see the kids every day, you realize that what you had seen there was nothing less than another world. But what was remarkable about that world was its utter normalcy. This is how people, when they're actually free, actually act.

"What," the young principal asked me as I was about to leave, "is pot?"

And now back to the U.S.A. From the *U.S. News & World Report* (December 24, 1979): "Parents thinking of transferring their children from troubled public schools to private institutions need to take a close look at what's involved."

And what is? The writer lists a lot of do's and don'ts, toting up the pluses and minuses, and then: "Another question is how much you can afford to pay. This year's tuition for first grade ranges from about \$1,250 to \$2,500, according to a recent survey by the National Association of Independent Schools. For grades 10 through 12 in day schools, the range is about \$1,500 to \$3,500. The cost of boarding school, including tuition, room and board, runs from \$3,500 to \$6,000 or more."

THE WALL OF FLESH

“No beast so fierce but knows
some touch of pity.”

Shakespeare, *King Richard III*

Volgograd. From where I started the walk to the Volga took me about seven minutes.

But it took the Nazis months and about 700,000 killed and wounded to reach the Volga. They touched it briefly and then were pushed back, and never reached it again.

Between them and the river stood a wall of human flesh which, soft as it was, they could not penetrate with cannons and bared steel. That wall of flesh saved mankind.

At the time, when this happened, the whole world understood this. It was self-evident. “Their glorious victory,” read the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in a message hailing the victory at Stalingrad, “stemmed the tide of invasion and marked the turning point of the war of the allied nations against the forces of aggression.”

His words are on a scroll now to be found in the Volgograd Historical Museum.

At the time, as the fate of the world hung literally in the balance here on these shores of the Volga, mankind collectively held its breath. Then nobody questioned Roosevelt’s words. And when the final victory was declared the free and freed world drew a historic sigh of relief. Praise was heaped on the valiant Soviet Army soldiers, not least of them from Winston Churchill, speaking out of one side of his mouth: “I send you heartfelt greetings on the splendid victory you have won in driving the invader from your soil and laying the Nazi tyrant low. . .”

And having sent praise, meanwhile the Allied army remained, for the third year, stationed in Great Britain busy “sewing on the last button of the last uniform of the last soldier” unfit till then

sartorially to cross 22 miles of water. Not until it became apparent that the Soviet Army would sweep the Nazis into the English channel itself was it suddenly announced that, the last button having been sewed onto the uniform of the last soldier, the trip across the channel would now be made. And it was made—it took a few hours to make it.

But when the Soviet Army delivered mortal blows to the German Nazis, a new politics, which had been hidden before, but not too well, especially among the America First crowd in the U.S.A., sprang into view. And it was plain that it was the old politics once again.

The fruit of victory were not to go to the valiant but to those who had waited. Churchill ordered the captured Nazi divisions to hold on to their guns and to maintain military formation. They might be needed against the Russians! Churchill's purple phrases had rolled in organ tones extolling the deeds of the Soviets. But, typical of the times and of the main bourgeois performers, it was later learned that his most famous speech delivered over BBC on June 4, 1940, "We shall fight on the beaches . . . we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender. . ." had really been delivered by an actor, Norman Shelley, whose imitation of Churchill's voice was better than the original! So, too, had Britain's participation in the war against Hitler been part-sham, part-necessity. Once the war was over and England's most deadly enemy, Hitler, removed by the Russians, Churchill called for an atomic attack on the country which he had praised in glowing terms hardly weeks before! Oh, perfidious Albion!

I remember during the war, in the midst of the world-wide rejoicing over the Soviet Army's victories, saying to myself: Will it be possible later, when circumstances change, and the Allies have recovered from their fright, to distort what actually happened? The whole world hails the Soviet victories now, and sees in the Battle of Stalingrad the turning-point of the war. How will it be tomorrow when "historians" get hold of these events? If they tried it today (in the middle of the war whose outcome was still not a sure thing), they would be denounced as fifth columnists, as traitors. But later?

I would live long enough to see.

The generation which grew up after the war no longer had

the benefit of first-hand experience. And not altogether to my surprise, I began to read that American schoolchildren, tested for their knowledge of recent history—for it was now the McCarthyite era and the Cold War had been well launched by this same Churchill at Fulton, Missouri, with Truman at his side in March, 1946—as often as not said that in the recent war the Americans fought *with* the Germans *against* the Russians!

In Volgograd you don't find any trees that are older than 35 years. The Nazis had killed not only people but as much of nature as they could. Nor are the buildings of this city much older. Almost none survived.

For these people peace is not just a word. War is not just a word. They know what peace is because they're alive.

Anyone who thinks that the Soviets harbor aggressive designs on anyone would have to deny the evidence of his eyes and the functioning of his brain if he came here. Watch them at work. Look at their blueprints! They are making and remaking this city which stands on torn flesh. The reality of their past is a living part of their present. Most of them are, in fact, alive only because their parents weren't killed before they were born. Not only were the living killed. Millions of unborn children were as effectively killed.

You ask: why would any people be so insane as to put in so much time, energy and money into building a city which, combined with other cities being rebuilt in the U.S.S.R., could keep them busy for a hundred years, only to jeopardize it all in another, this time, more devastating war?

Here, on a high hill over the common grave of tens of thousands of soldiers, including the son of the Spanish Communist leader, Dolores Ibarruri, Pasionaria, stands a magnificent statue of a woman which can be seen for miles around. She is holding a sword to the sky and she is calling on mankind to rise to the defense of the motherland and of all humanity.

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION, HEALTH PROTECTION,
REST AND LEISURE. . .



The school year begins





In an Uzbek village school
Teachers and pupils
Professional skills are also taught in school



Medical examination



Operating theater



Sochi, the Black Sea resort, vacationers come from
all over the Soviet Union

On the beach



Vacationers from Leningrad's Kirov Works at Beliye
Nochi Holiday Home, at their setting-up exercises
on the seashore

Crimean location of the Artek Young Pioneer Camp



Neva Holiday Home was built under the expansion program
of the Tenth Five-Year Plan

VOLGOGRAD



View of downtown Volgograd from the riverside



View of Lenin Square with the House of Soldiers' Glory
in the center and (on the right in the background) the
ruins of the flour mill preserved in memory of the fierce
fighting here in 1942



Volga riverside



"The Motherland Calls" is the central monument of the Mamayev Kurgan war memorial

AT HOME IN KABUL

Turn your 'orse from Kabul town...
Rudyard Kipling, *Ford o' Kabul River*

On my way to Kabul, the night of January 8, 1980, I read in my copy of the *International Herald-Tribune* that once I landed in Kabul, which had been "the scene of fighting between Soviet and Afghan soldiers," I would find no Afghan soldier with a gun. The Soviets, I was told, had disarmed all Afghans.

The first thing I saw at the bottom of the ramp from the plane that had just landed at Kabul airport was an Afghan soldier holding his bare-bayoneted rifle at attention.

The second thing I saw when I entered the waiting room was another Afghan soldier, this one was holding a sub-machine gun.

And it would be like this for the eight days I spent in Kabul, where the war of words was the only war I would know. Kabul itself was quiet, orderly, and going about its business. But the air around it was filled with BBC, Voice of America, and many other "voices." The "war" was in New York, London and Islamabad. And there it was a war *for* a war. Here, in Kabul, the "war" was for peace.

Almost the whole contingent of Moscow bourgeois reporters (along with almost 200 other "Western" reporters) came flocking to this capital—this "blasted place", as Kipling saw it—the moment word had gone out that visas would be issued to any journalist who wanted to come. Abroad, in Kabul, I felt at home. This was the same mob I had last seen at the Scharansky trial in Moscow! In those eight days I would be a close-up witness to an astounding attempt to frame up, not just one man, but a whole people—a whole revolution.

Everything was speeded up tremendously in Kabul. The U.N. was in session. Carter had made the charge that the Soviet Union had sent troops into Afghanistan as an occupying, invading, illegal force, and it had become desperately necessary, for his case to gain even the slightest credence, for these reporters to come up

with evidence to prove the charge already made! Time was of the essence. "Are you going to hang him *anyhow*—and try him afterward?" Mark Twain would have one of his characters ask. You bet!

Because they had to come up with material that Carter needed on the spot, and quickly, to sway public opinion and the U.N. vote, the newspaper reporters that fell on Kabul that week of January had neither the time nor the inclination to hide behind any of the usual protective devices that saved them from complete exposure in Moscow, and came out as they really *are*. They fell on Kabul like journalistic thugs. Eventually the country had to expel them the way you expel some foreign, poisonous food caught in your body. But before that happened, they wreaked what was almost a Dadaist—for its lurid absurdities, its insane hyperbole—vengeance on this desperately poor, desperately struggling country, whose only offense is that it is trying to lift the burden of centuries of poverty and oppression from its back!

To want to free oneself today of the past is to invoke the wrath of American imperialism, and to want to seek the help for this of Soviet socialism, is the crime of crimes, for which there is to be no mercy.

In those eight days in Kabul, I observed the scene and I wrote my reports. The *only* reports, honest and accurate, that came out of Kabul to the U.S.A. in that long week were—and I say this not with pride but with sadness—mine. And the only newspaper in the United States that published the truth about Afghanistan was the *Daily World*.

All the rest of the information that the American people read in those days from that country was—and again I say it regretfully—untrue. Lies. Just lies, lies, lies!

And I shall prove it.

The American bourgeois reporters who came from Moscow to Afghanistan hardly stopped to see where they were before they moved into the attack—aggressive, insulting, arrogant, they acted as though they'd just landed into a "banana republic." Hardly 24 hours in Kabul, totally indifferent to where they were, how the people lived, or what they were doing, they moved into a pre-schemed pattern of assault whose aim was to deliver the "facts" proving that the Soviets were an occupying force, re-

sisted by the local people. And where those facts were absent—as they were—their duty was to find them—somehow. And they did. They “found” them in their heads.

It all came out explosively, revealingly, and for those who were there, unforgettably, at the first press conference at Chelestoan Palace on January 10. The premise on which the Babrak Karmal government had acted in granting visas to the Western press now seems, in retrospect, to have been naive: it had wanted to show the world that it had nothing to hide, and if the press came and saw for itself, surely the world would be so informed! As for the U.N., those members frightened by the spectre of “intervention” would then see that there’s a world of difference between intervention and assistance.

The Soviets had been invited by the legitimate government to come to its aid. It did so. It sent in a “limited contingent” and declared, in advance, that this contingent would only guard the frontiers from real intervention (which had in fact been going on for months before) and would not interfere with internal affairs. The Soviet government has repeatedly made clear that Soviet troops would leave Afghanistan as soon as attacks from Pakistan, China and the U.S.A. had stopped. Help is help—and intervention is intervention. Certainly the people “intervened” against would know that they were being intervened! I asked as many as I could how they felt about the Soviet troops in their country, and knowing me for an American reporter, whose political position they assumed they also knew, they told me what they really felt about Soviet troops in their country. And what they told me was that they were glad the Soviet troops were there. As simple as that.

Babrak Karmal, at 51, an intense, as it seemed to me, able man, who spoke with great fervor and some eloquence, opened the conference with this statement:

“Friendly journalists and unfriendly journalists! I thank the former on behalf of the RDPA (People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan), the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) government, the freedom-loving, valiant and independent people of Afghanistan.

Likewise, I point out to the unfriendly journalists who have come here from the West, from imperialist nations and those attached to them that when the CIA agent murdered the late Nur Mohammed Taraki, the first General Secretary of the PDPA CC, the first president of the RC (Revolutionary Council) and the prime minister of the DRA in collusion with a CIA plot and usurped the legitimate government in a conspiratorial manner, where were you journalists then?

You unfriendly journalists, you so-called champions of the 'Free World,' you so-called champions of 'Human Rights,' led by Mr. Carter, where were you?

Gentlemen, when the CIA agent was savagely terrorizing our people and tens of thousands of our compatriots, including workers, peasants, honest clergy, the intelligentsia and men of learning, were chained, or groups of them were sent to jails and chambers of horrors, or massacred, where were you? Today, as if scared by a spectre, you have been raising a riotous hue and cry in the whole world.

Your motive does not need any proof. It was clear that the band of Amin and the Aminis was in collusion with international reaction and imperialism. It had joined your ranks. However, the front consisting of progressive forces is also prepared to resist you to promote its just cause. Now please put your questions."

It was not a diplomatic opening. It was an attack—an accusation—it boiled with passion. Less than two weeks had gone by since Amin had been toppled. Karmal was well aware by now that he had let the hounds of hell into his house. Even so, he was ready to give them a chance.

The noisy uproar which all the organs of Western propaganda had created around the "Afghan issue" had its clear reasons and its clear aims. One forgets sometimes that the noise that seems to take over the world is electrically manufactured and represents the conscious will of no more than a few thou-

sand individuals (and not all of them committed to the issue farther than their pay-checks).

But the struggle to win over public opinion in America had gone into high gear. Still smarting from its almost total moral defeat after a decade of political catastrophes crowned with an ugly war, a presidential assassination, and a profound economic crisis, which President Carter himself had publicly acknowledged in a speech where he admitted the national "loss of confidence" in America's institutions, an America under tighter and tighter control of monopoly stood at a perilous moment for itself. What to do?

President Carter had sunk to the lowest point in his political career. Having won the presidency by successfully hiding his real views from the people who voted for him, his time in office had so completely exposed the emptiness of his slogans and the cynicism of his demagogy, that his popularity plummeted to the absolute bottom of the political barrel.

The campaign that Carter launched—after a series of international setbacks, the key one being the "loss" of Iran, though the "loss" of Nicaragua hurt, too—had, as its immediate beneficiary which determined its timing, his own 1980 campaign for the presidency.

He was at a point in his personal career when "something" had to be done.

And Carter used Afghanistan!

Obviously, the policy itself, in which Afghanistan plays nothing but the part of a pretext, had been determined long before. But it was difficult to turn the people suddenly around. Americans had welcomed detente, as they had accepted the war-time policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union, and that was a considerable obstacle. Again, the American people needed "the hell scared out of them." It had worked before; it would work again. The "Soviet threat" was brought out of mothballs and Afghanistan was its name.

The reporters who swarmed into Kabul that week of January knew what they were there for—the victim had already been chosen; their job now was to find the evidence to convict him! "Are you going to hang him *anyhow*? . . ."

This was why, hardly long enough in the country to learn to

spell its name, the horde of American reporters who trooped into Chelesteen Palace that Thursday, January 10, were already primed with accusations that had been packed into their bags and brought with them. Their role was to create the "chorus." They performed like well-trained actors, pre-programmed and pre-scripted. Here is a sampling of what they asked.

The man from ABC-TV asked sarcastically when Soviet troops would leave the country; would they still be there in a year? And Karmal told him: "Whenever the aggressive policy of American imperialism now in collusion with Peking leaders, and the provocations and plots of reactionary circles in Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, etc., and the danger of aggression is eliminated, on that same day and that same moment, the limited Soviet contingent will leave for home."

ABC-TV silenced for a moment, BBC picked up where it had been stopped. One must remember that long before this day BBC had been beaming daily programs to Afghanistan which, for viciousness and sheer reckless invention, had not been equalled since Goebbels. As the Afghans know (if the Americans don't) the British had tried to subdue Afghanistan for more than a hundred years. "Kabul town was ours to take," Kipling sang, though he added bitterly enough, "Kabul town's a blasted place, Kabul town'll go to hell. . . Turn your 'orse from Kabul town" and it took a special species of gall—of British colonial arrogance—for BBC even to show their face in Afghanistan. But nothing embarrassed them. The BBC wanted to know how Karmal had been elected.

It was obvious that it took a great deal of restraint and control for Karmal to answer this insulting and provocative question, but he said: "You are the old face of British imperialism which invaded our country three times in the past and three times you got a bloody nose from the Afghans! I will answer your question this way. If you recall, following the Saur (April) Revolution, I was Vice-President of the Revolutionary Council, Deputy Prime Minister, and Secretary of the People's Democratic Party. After the plot hatched by the CIA and American imperialism represented by Amin and the Aminis and the martyrdom of the late Nur Mohammed Taraki, the largest majority of the committed members of the PDPA CC and those of the RC together decided

to destroy the CIA band represented by Hafizullah Amin. At that time, on the basis of principles followed by our party and government, they had nominated me as General Secretary of the PDPA CC, President of the RC and Prime Minister of DRA. When I returned two months ago to my homeland through revolutionary routes and contacted the majority of the PDPA members and of the RC, we adopted all the necessary measures before American imperialism could stage a coup in Afghanistan and before they could implement their aggressive plan from the Pakistan borders. At that time, due to the wisdom and awareness of the people of Afghanistan and those of the PDPA and of the RDA government, a meeting was held which condemned the CIA agent, Hafizullah Amin to execution and decided to launch the second phase of the Saur Revolution."

There were other "questions" (questions only in form, but provocations in substance). A Finnish newswoman, noting that "Afghan leaders had been killing each other," asked Karmal insolently whether he also might not be murdered. "I can assure you, respected lady," Karmal replied calmly, "that the last vestiges of the plots of the murderous CIA will come to an end in Afghanistan. . ."

A West German reporter asked provocatively whether, with Soviet troops on its territory, Afghanistan could still be considered non-aligned. Another one wanted to "know" what the "correct" number of Soviet troops was—were "Western reports" right that there were "75,000 Soviet troops" inside the country? Or—a bit embarrassed at the figure which, incidentally, fluctuated from 30,000 to 85,000—"would these be an exaggeration?"

Karmal's answer: "Evidently these are an exaggeration. Aren't you familiar enough with the lie factories in the West?"

That was like asking the questioner whether he was familiar with his nose.

Another questioner wanted to know how many Soviet troops had been "wounded, killed or taken prisoner." Reports had abounded in the Western press of Soviet casualties whose agile numbers had also fluctuated amazingly depending on the imaginative versatility of the particular reporter. Karmal answered: "None of them." A flat answer. But it got no notice in the "Western" press.

I had been amazed at President Carter's statement that the murderer of Taraki, the man who had put thousands of Afghan patriots into prison, and whose murders of others were still uncounted, was the "legitimate president" of Afghanistan. So I asked Karmal what seemed to me then—and seems to me now—a very natural question. Why?

Why did Carter, who had made his hatred of Communists and of Communism unmistakable to the world, who had publicly declared that "America" would never accept Communists in the Italian government no matter how many people elected them, who backed Pinochet, the killer of all kinds of democrats in Chile (and even in Washington, DC itself!)—why was he so "fond" of Amin who, by the way, in his public speeches, had pictured himself as far more to the Left than any known Communist then living?

Karmal had already made the charge that Amin had been a CIA agent, and there was a disposition, not only among the Western press, but among others more sympathetic to the Afghan cause, to dismiss the charge altogether, or put it on ice, as being now a routine charge which opponents made of one another in lieu of hard proof.

Still, it seemed to me that this public approval of Amin by Carter was the kiss of death to a man who was already dead but whose busy corpse was still around. What proof existed that he was a CIA man? Karmal promised to bring up the proof in due course, and later, the editor of the *Kabul New Times*, Rahim Raft, (who served as Karmal's interpreter during the press conferences) would tell us that when Amin was a student in the U.S.A. in 1966-67, he had been head of the Afghan Students Association. The Association, it was later revealed, had been funded by Asia House, a CIA conduit, and these revelations of CIA undercover work (which nobody at the time dreamed would ever come to public light, for what was safer than a CIA secret?) made it plain that the CIA had contacted *all* foreign students in America in an effort to recruit them. This was a very logical thing to do, for these students were slated for future leadership in their home countries, and to have a CIA-connected man in top leadership of a country with strategic importance

IN AFGHANISTAN



The People's Armed Forces of Afghanistan played a key role in the April Revolution. In the foreground, Guliam Furuk, commander of the Afghan 15th Separate Tank Brigade, who distinguished himself in the Afghan revolution



Press conference given by Babrak Karmal, General Secretary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, and Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, January 11, 1980



Afghans welcome Soviet soldiers temporarily stationed in Afghanistan on the invitation of the Afghan government with hospitality and gratitude



Afghan students and workers, office employees and peasants are frequent visitors to the Mazari Sharif library's reading room

to American imperialism, was worth all the money and effort involved.

Amin was one of these.

So what we had in Afghanistan was a revolutionary situation with an acute danger of counter-revolution. Revolutions aren't tidy, and when confronted by counter-revolution, led by erstwhile trusted leaders, masters of deceit and double-dealing, they tend to become even less tidy. But this one, by all accounts, took place with extraordinary speed, in less than three hours, and the army, which Amin had counted on, not only did not defend him but led the attack. In the end there was no one to fight for him. Amin's attempt to launch a counter-revolution was frustrated by the revolutionary forces. It was the revolution that was saved by the Afghan patriots, and the Soviet troops entered the country to make sure that what imperialism's man inside the country had tried to do and failed, could not successfully be done by imperialist forces outside the country gathered in Pakistan. It was, as they proclaimed, their "internationalist duty" to do so.

But the reporters who had come from Moscow and from European capitals didn't care about "saving a revolution." What they wanted was somehow to prove that the Soviets had marched into Afghanistan over the protesting bodies of the people and had instituted a military occupation.

That was the frame, and they got busy to fill it in with the "convincing" details.

Once the conference was over at the Palace, the reporters had a chance to see where they were. They had come into Kabul overnight and had hardly had a chance to locate Afghanistan on the map, let alone bone up on its history.

In any case, they didn't care a damn about its history or any of its problems. What the people wanted, how they had suffered, what the program of the People's Democratic Party was—anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, democratic—mattered nothing. And it mattered as little that the population was 80-90 per cent illiterate, that usury of the most incredible oppressive nature had bound literally millions of peasants to the will of an exploitive class of usurers, that women, hidden behind their *chadras* (veils) had hardly moved toward liberation in a thousand years, that child labor abounded, that child marriages were still in force,

and so on—feudalism, almost as it had been for ages before! To them it was simple: Afghanistan belonged to the Western power structure and it was the duty of all Western journalists to support that myth and develop some kind of rationale for it. And nothing more.

The trouble started for them immediately. Kabul was quiet. In fact, normalcy was the only word that could describe it. Soviet troops were not in sight. The only troops one saw in Kabul were unmistakably Afghan, who guarded strategic public buildings.

There was no, and would be no, shooting audible all the time I was in Kabul, though “shooting” in Kabul would be reported several times, then and later. It was weird, to say the least, to hear over the BBC on one of the quietest of days that a “civil disturbance” had taken place. But where?

I took a cab and with my Afghan interpreter, a 19-year-old medical student who was, meanwhile, boning up for his final exams at Kabul University, toured the city for several hours.

It had snowed the night before. Even the guards at the public buildings had gone inside. Boys were throwing snow-balls at each other. At one point I saw two camels plodding behind their master in the snow—and this astonishing fact—camels in *snow* not sand—remained for me the prototype image of Kabul in the middle of a “war” which remained invisible, unheard, and unfought everywhere except in the American papers and on American, British, Israeli, Peking, Pakistani “voices”.

But what a war was being fought in the papers! “Russians Pound Guerrillas,” cried the headline in the *Herald Tribune* on January 4, reporting from—New Delhi. The story on this “fighting” would be typical of all the later stories (including the latest as I write, “Shooting in Kabul”—reported from Islamabad *via* New York!) that poured out of the reporters’ typewriters and their imaginations:

“Reports from Afghanistan said that the Russians encountered strong resistance in the provincial capital of Jalalabad, 60 miles from Pakistan’s border.

“Diplomats have confirmed the fighting at Jalalabad but they said that they had no information on the extent of the combat. Afghan refugees reaching New Delhi today said, however, that the fighting was heavy. ‘Many people have been killed in Jala-

labad but the Russians are not yet in control,' an Afghan said. Some earlier report had said that the city had been occupied by Soviet troops.

"In Pakistan, the daily newspaper *Jang* reported that 5,000 Soviet paratroopers had been dropped in the northwest Afghanistan province of Badakhaham to aid Soviet troops, meeting strong rebel resistance. The paper's report could not be verified. . .

"Afghan refugees said that Soviet forces had crushed Afghan army resistance at the Balahasar military base in Kabul but had not yet taken Karagh, 10 miles west of the capital."

That was January 4. The "reporters" were "diplomats," "Afghan refugees," the Pakistan paper *Jang*, whose story could not be "verified."

On January 7, the *Herald Tribune*, now with a Kabul dateline, would say:

"The Soviet Union opened Kabul to Western journalists today as exile insurgent leaders said that the Soviet troops deployed in the country by land and air were nearing 80,000. Diplomatic sources confirmed that heavy fighting was continuing between the Russians and Afghan rebels.

"Journalists entering the country found few signs of the large Soviet military presence, however. Afghan troops patrolled the streets in the sub-zero weather with the Soviet troops and tank presence at a minimum."

But this story, for some reason, was headlined "Bitter Strife Spreading in Afghanistan." What the reporters themselves saw was "few signs of a large military presence," but the *diplomats*, always unnamed, and the Afghan "refugees" who also were not expected to have names, and "rebels" and "sources"—absolutely none of them identifiable—saw "heavy fighting." But where?

The most astonishing thing of all—being in Kabul, in the midst of what their own newspapers and the BBC and Voice of America were reporting as an occupied city, where resistance had not yet been suppressed, they chose to report from . . . Pakistan! "Anti-Communist Afghan rebels claimed . . . Soviet troops in the northern hill provinces, witnesses reported. . . Fighting continued in a half-dozen Afghan provinces today, sources here said. . . The *Jang* newspaper of Karachi, Pakistan, quoting

rebel sources..." And so on. Absolutely nothing! But it was "reported"!

As for Kabul itself—rumors and fiction. There is no fighting, no strife, nothing untoward in Kabul. How explain it? How to make something of it? "One ranking Western diplomat here—" that mouth of purest ray serene, whom we often met in Moscow, "said"—but what he "said" has no substance at all, and he has no reality at all, no name, no identification, nothing! But his malice has a name and address: it is CIA-U.S.A.

Now that they had learned the hang of it, the newspapers went all out. On January 10, the *Herald Tribune* was reporting from Kabul, under the headline "Soviet Troops Said Massing Near Pakistan" that "three travellers" (this is the "source" of the headline: "three travellers" in "Islamabad, Pakistan"!) said that "they saw about 20 large transport planes bringing reinforcements."

That's all: just "three travellers saw." But on the basis of these grains of sand, which the "three travellers" contributed, the paper goes on to build a skyscraper.

"The Russians were reported already to have 5,000 troops in Kandahar, a major crossroads city at the edge of the southwestern desert. The reinforcement mission apparently was carried out by air because rebel forces were capable of striking road convoys in Hindu Kush passes between Kabul and Kandahar.

"Rebel sources quoted by the *Pakistan Times* claimed that most Afghan government troops in Kandahar province had defected and joined the anti-Communist insurgents. This could not be verified and U.S. sources said that the reports of defections appeared to be exaggerated."

At last an admission of sorts!

But mark the name "Kandahar" in the above story. Let me run ahead. I am now in Kabul and speaking to a young girl. Unlike most of the reporting from Kabul, whose sources were uniformly anonymous, mine are not. Her name is Fareedah Hatif. She is a medical student who had been studying in New Delhi, and had come home, to Kandahar, for a visit. The crisis had caught her. This is now January 12—only three days after the report that "5,000 Soviet troops" had occupied Kandahar, and the night before, fighting had been "reported" over that in-

variably accommodating source of unimpeachable information, BBC. All such "sources" liked to give precise figures—and so it was "reported" that 200 Russians had been killed while taking the city and much of the city itself had been destroyed.

I asked Fareedah Hatif: "Was there fighting? Are there Russian troops?"

"But, no," she said (she speaks English), with amazement—for she is very young and quite new at the game—"I heard the BBC radio but I saw nothing!" Was it possible that she, who was in Kandahar, could possibly miss seeing 5,000 Soviet troops, who had just lost 200 in a sharp engagement with Afghan troops, and that the BBC and "diplomats" reporting news from Pakistan had actually seen from their vantage points what had been invisible from hers?

It's not possible for a single pair of feet to run down every rumor, every fabrication, every "diplomatic" report. In Kabul, however, much was possible—and impossible. It was possible to check rumors about the city itself; impossible to check them about places outside the city. But if Western radios were telling you—who lived in the city—that fighting was going on underneath your hotel window, and you looked out of your window, and all you saw was a woman wearing a *chadra* walking by, then you could safely conclude from that instructive experience that the same radio reporting that "heavy fighting" was going on in Khyber Pass or wherever was lying. If you were told by that same radio that "Russians" were being attacked in the bazaars, and you yourself took a walk through the bazaars, buying an item or two with the usual bargaining, and meeting the reporter from the *Chicago Tribune* also there, and no harm coming to you or to the "Western journalist"—nor to the Russians you also met strolling among the stalls—"Beautiful garnet beads—cheap! Make me an offer!"—you could be excused for taking all their reports about the rest of the country as the cynical lying that it was.

But why did they lie so recklessly?

Time. Lack of time was the main factor. Carter badly needed stories from Afghanistan itself to push through the U.N. resolution on Afghanistan, and before the world, and particularly Americans, could catch on to the enormous hoax that was being perpetrated. He was hoping to push through Congress a whole series of measures (carefully prepared in advance), the sum of which

was to wreck detente and set the scene for the introduction of a new version of the old cold war. He would announce that American interests now demanded that America intervene, through its rapid deployment force and other means, into any situation on the globe where it felt like going—where “American interests” were being “challenged.” Not least of all, of course, he needed the “Afghan story” to win the nomination (he hoped!) from Kennedy and the election from the Republicans.

It was a repeat of the “Remember the Maine” episode in American imperial history. “You furnish the pictures,” William Randolph Hearst, Sr., had cabled his “reporters” in Cuba in 1897, “and I’ll furnish the war!”

And they tried their best to “furnish the pictures.” A terrible conspiracy against the American people, first of all, was being spun out in the White House. A political coup had been sprung on the people. The American people had been caught unprepared; and so, too, was Europe. Western Europe had been mouse-trapped into accepting NATO missiles on their soil because their leaders, not usually so naive, had believed Carter when he assured them that Congress would adopt SALT-2 which would reliably protect them from an unbridled arms race. Now, Carter announced that SALT-2 was shelved; it would not even be brought up for debate. And, as dramatically as it was possible to do so, he drove home the point, with that tactic, that he (and his backers) considered Western Europe expendable—a “card” to be played—and sacrificed—when circumstances dictated.

But in their haste to get the “evidence” American correspondents had no time—and later, it became obvious, no inclination—to want to cover up their footprints, nor to come up with more convincing information. All of it was second- or third-hand, ascribed to anonymous spokesmen, to “diplomats” with no names, and the obviously wild claims coming out of Pakistan were quoted as though they were God’s own sacred testimony, although even a child could see how ludicrous they were, how impossible to confirm, how impossible even to have witnessed.

Malice wrote the dispatches. The order was to make it seem that the Soviets were an occupying force, brutally subduing a recalcitrant people, wiping out religion, and shooting down all opposition.

Yet nothing of the sort—*nothing of the sort*—took place.

There was a new quality of arrogance in the content of the stories and particularly in the brazen way they were published—as though the newspapers, acting as agents of their class, were saying: “Sure, we’re lying. We’re lying about Afghanistan, as we lied about Vietnam and Korea, as we lied about the ‘Soviet threat.’ So what?”

This, then—all this that I’ve itemized—would be the pattern of the “news” issuing in such torrents from Afghanistan and poured onto the unresisting and whirling heads of a world population which, all things considered, had to believe, with such massive “reporting,” *something* had to be true!

But there was no truth in it. It was made up—fabricated—cut out of whole cloth. Reports of “fighting”—not first-hand, nor from eye-witnesses, but from “rebels” in Islamabad! Reports of “disturbances” in Kabul—from the BBC in London! Reports of “massacres” and “executions”—from an unnamed official in Washington!

And so it went from big to little, from little to big. *Time Magazine*, for instance, reported several times that the Soviets had replaced the Afghani with rubles. No truth, of course, in it. In fact, such an action would have been the height of folly, calculated to antagonize a whole nation in one blow!

But reports of such quixotic notions are calculated. They are deliberate in the hope of creating an image of the Soviets that is so irrational, so lacking in common sense, whose motives are so inexplicable, that no ordinary American might hope to understand them. The cartoon caricature of Soviet officials and citizens which have been the typical fare of TV shows, spy novels, children’s “comics,” and other media, both less and more “respectable,” is what reaction hopes will become fixed upon the American mind. The aim is to make it impossible for any normal, average American to find a common element of humanity between himself and a Soviet citizen.

If successful, the caricature of the Soviet Union as a country led by irrational people would make it possible to launch even more extreme charges—and actions—against the U.S.S.R., whose validity the “man-in-the-street” could never hope to judge.

I would attend a second press conference with Babrak Kar-

mal, visit and talk with students at the Kabul University (almost 10,000 attending there), I would interview two members of the formerly underground Central Committee, I would speak to “ordinary” people, wander through the bazaars. And, finally, on January 17, I prepared to leave Kabul for Moscow. Meanwhile, the Afghan government had come to the end of its patience with the American reporters.

The American newsmen had been told to go—Afghanistan had a bellyful of them and their stories. Such stories could be written just as well from New York, London and Paris. (I was leaving the same day by coincidence).

But even as I sat in Kabul airport waiting for a plane that was an hour or so late, a battle was going on right there next to the airport, with guns and screaming planes, and rumbling tanks—and I saw and heard none of it!

My inevitable *Herald Tribune* would tell me when I got back to Moscow that “reports reaching diplomats in *Pakistan*”—my involuntary italics—“said that fighting broke out today near Kabul airport between Soviet troops and Afghan army units. Unconfirmed”—ah, unconfirmed!—“accounts said that clashes also took place near the Bala Hassar fort. . . The diplomats reported hearing aircraft flying over and a lot of shooting which they thought was coming from the planes although they were not certain.”

While all that was going on, I was buying peanuts in that same airport!

In Moscow, I would read that a *Pravda* correspondent asked Minister of National Defense of Afghanistan, Mohammad Rafi, who certainly ought to know when a war’s going on, what his reaction to this “report” of fighting near the Kabul airport was.

Answer: “What nonsense! There was no clash, just as there was no mutinous regiment. The imperialists are conducting a propaganda war against us because we are one of the contingents of progressive forces. They dislike the changes in Afghanistan and our friendship with the Soviet Union. But we are glad that the Soviet Union is on our side at this critical moment. Afghan officers and soldiers treat their Soviet comrades as brothers.” (*Pravda*, January 28, 1980.)

Later, reports of counter-revolutionary disturbances (like the

shop-burnings in February in Kabul, for instance) did occur in fact. But the Afghanistan government did not deny it! That's the point. Nor did the government deny that there had been problems with university students (a handful).*

But the bourgeois press, in addition to reporting—and embellishing—these openly admitted instances of counter-revolutionary activity, invented entirely new ones.

Of course, in real Kabul, the students at the University were not represented by the dozens of Maoists and others who had “rebelled.” Thousands turned out for a mass meeting denouncing these “rebels”—but not a whiff of this in the bourgeois press! No whiff either of the fact that day by day more and more tribesmen who had fled the country were returning, that forces alienated from the government by Amin now were pledging their support to Babrak Karmal, that peasants to whom land had been granted were plowing it, that classes to abolish illiteracy were sprouting up all over the country!

Nobody denies that a struggle exists in Afghanistan. But it's mostly an imported one—it comes from Pakistan, sent in by American, Chinese and other “advisers”! The program and policy of the government of Afghanistan is a wise one, it is bound to prevail and as time goes on, will prove itself.

But that's the point—the enemies of Afghanistan and of peace itself don't want to give them the time. And part of that tactic is to fill the air with newspaper alarms every day!

Taking far-reaching measures, as a result of which a policy is being imposed on the Americans (who do not know the true facts) that presents a threat not only to the Americans themselves but to millions of other people, the Carter Administration—while it was still in office—had time and again been guided by the disinformation of its reporters, which it had itself provoked.

The slander campaign against the Soviet Union, going on from year to year, gained ferocious momentum during those memorable eight days, when the American press installed itself in Kabul, and the entire world saw—at least those who would see—what an awful monster this press could become and what a danger such a political line presented.

* As I verified on a second visit that same year.

LAST WORDS

"What is truth? said jesting Pilate;
and would not stay for an answer."

Francis Bacon, *Of Truth*

So, what about the facts? How did they make out?

We started this book showing that both American and Soviet dictionaries agreed on what a *fact* is.

Reading the dispatches of a number of American journalists in the three years I was in Moscow, and comparing their impressions with my impressions, often of the very same events, places, people, even I had to take a double-take and ask myself: is it possible we saw the same things, went to the same places, talked to the same people?

Obviously, yes. Or is it obviously, no? As William Blake put it:

*Both read the Bible and night,
But thou read'st black where I read white.*

Or, again quoting Blake (who seems to have met the same reporters I did): "*A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.*"

The fact is—a conclusion one must unhappily come to after having had it pushed into one's face for three years—is that most reporters from the West have abandoned entirely the classic five W's (who, what, when, where, why) when it comes to reporting the Soviet scene. Even the notion of *reporting*—in the same sense that Kevin Klose of the *Washington Post* used to report the crime scene in Washington, DC—is in itself an absurdity. You don't "report" a revolution—a country's monumental struggles—an historic development of such mammoth proportions in the same way, and with the same reporting tools, with which you report the antics of the Argentine bomb-shell, or the drunken escapades of a Congressman!

Western reporters reporting the Soviet scene do not impose on

themselves the austere requirement of "giving fact without opinion." On the contrary, all their *facts* are *steeped* in opinion, just the way a fish is marinated in horse-radish sauce. It's still identifiable as a fish—but no fish ever tasted that way straight from the ocean!

Perhaps the whole thing is hopeless and we're condemned in fact to a Humpty-Dumpty world? "When I use a word," Humpty-Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

And adds, a moment later: "The question is... which is to be master—that's all."*

The situation today is not too dissimilar. An attempt is being made on a world scale to force words to mean "just what I choose" to make them mean, and the only question at issue is "which is to be master—that's all."

But surely there are limits to how far "interpretation" can go? When the facts are twisted beyond all recognition, or even to mean the opposite of what they palpably mean, surely this is going too far—and beyond it, one falls off the edge of the world?

Interpretations of events differ and honestly differ, as we've already conceded. But there *is* an objective, ascertainable standard by which judgements can be made. We still agree, for instance, that a society that abuses any of its children is a corrupt society. We still agree that a social system that oppresses women, minorities, workers, etc., cannot be accepted as fully civilized. We still agree that unprovoked aggression of one country against another is criminal. That lying, circulating false tales is contemptible. In short, we still agree that there is an objective standard of human and social behavior by which we can make judgements, good or bad.

It's not just "which is to be master," and the meaning *I* attach to words is the arbitrary meaning *I choose* to attach to them!

And yet there are problems. No amount of truthful reporting, of accurate phrasing, of seeing to it that interpretation snugly fits the words—facts—being "interpreted" will, for instance, convince a New York landlord or real estate agency that low-cost

* Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*.

housing for everybody is a good thing. How can he exult over the fact that rents for houses in the USSR are absurdly low, and that everyone, by law, is entitled to a roof over his head? From his point of view, it is the sheerest kind of tyranny—a gross violation of his *rights*—to make rents nominal and to guarantee *everybody*, by law, a house or an apartment from which he cannot be evicted except for outright criminality.

The same applies to medical care and public health. What businessman in the jacket of a doctor wants it bruited about too loudly that it's possible to have a health-care system somewhere—anywhere—in the world that costs the patient absolutely nothing? *He'd* rather hear that such a system is inefficient, must break down—and he'll leap to read stories in the press that make such points with great relish indeed!

And so on. The list of Soviet achievements—not just aspirations, not just ideals to be “pursued,” but solid achievements that have been nailed down—that are *facts*—is long and impressive. In sum, they characterize Soviet socialism and show that, if honestly judged from the point of view of what system does the most *for* the most, the Soviet system comes off with flying colors. And the process never stops. The direction is always onward and upward—today is good, tomorrow will be better. And this movement can be seen, weighed, tasted and felt by everybody.

Why not say so, then?

If one's aim is to establish the facts, without fear or favor, indeed one will hurry to say so! It's important to all of humanity to know that some part of it has managed to solve some of the world's most stubborn, yet ever-pressing, problems.

But, as we've seen, there are many people in the West for whom the truth about the Soviet Union—with its negative and positive included, but *both* included—is simply no help. Again, what can a landlord do with the truth about low rents in the U.S.S.R.?

And there's the problem.

When the truth is of no value to someone—anyone—when the truth threatens or seems to threaten his interests—then, human nature being what it is, such a man—or such a class—will reject the truth. What *good* is it to me?

The only other thing to be considered is: why should the ten-

ant be forced to accept the point of view of the landlord on housing? Or the patient the point of view of the medical establishment? Or the civilian the view of the military? Or the ordinary worker the point of view of a billionaire boss?

Soviets and Americans, take them man for man, and woman for woman, find that they get along very well with each other when they can meet on their own without interference. Since the Meeting on the Elbe, when Soviet and American soldiers shook hands, there has been an enduring, sometimes underground but nevertheless persistent, affection among ordinary Americans for those startling Russkies with their whirling dances, mad accordions, bear-hugs and hearty kisses, and every time the Moiseyev, or the Bolshoi, or the Berioska companies show up on the American stage, they've always been greeted warmly—whether it's been in New York, San Francisco, or stops in between.

The same happens when American companies show up in the Soviet Union.

Nor is it any different when Soviet and American doctors get together, or scientists, artists, writers, as experience has shown. Granted that they are given a chance to meet face-to-face, Russians and Americans always manage to find a way to get along together with mutual respect and often mutual affection.

Soviets and Americans *like* each other—it's a fact! But if you get a poison-pen letter every day in your mail that says your next-door neighbor is a wife-beater, or a dead-beat, or a two-timer, in the end you might be excused if you begin to believe some of it. At least, you figure, where there's so much smoke there must be some fire!

That, essentially, is the role most reporters in Moscow—as in other socialist countries—play—poison-pen letter writers. You read them at your peril.

When Irina Rodnina, Soviet top figure-skater, with her husband, won the gold at Lake Placid's Winter Olympics, all of America, watching TV, saw her eyes fill with tears of emotion as she stood on the winner's podium and listened to her country's anthem being played. Millions of American viewers were moved to tears with her.

In the White House, they also saw that face! And you can

be sure that someone there swore: "That face alone has wrecked millions of dollars of anti-Soviet propaganda! We'll never let that happen again! Thank God, and Carter, NBC won't be at the summer Olympics in Moscow!"

What's the answer then?

The answer is that even the landlord has to have his house standing in order to rent it! He can't rent a heap of ruins. Nor can the commercial doctor make money out of millions of radiation victims—including himself. And even newspaper editors—if there are no newspapers left there are no editors left either!

Peace—is the answer. Everyone has a stake in peace except for the hopeless Dr. Strangeloves who, infected with the Forrestal fever, keep crying: "The Russians are coming!"

The Russians *are* coming—if you let them—only with their hockey teams, their dancers, their singers and their circuses! And, the other way around—again, if you let them—the Americans are coming to Russia, not with bombs, but with Benny Goodman, William Saroyan and other writers, actors and musicians.

One should trust one's eyes—that Irina Rodnina you saw on television, those tears of deep patriotism that she showed, were real. The country that she represented she loves.

Don't let newspaper scribblers, whose hearts belong to Big Daddy, whether his name is Hearst or Hitler, make you pay for their ink with your blood.

And that's the most important fact of all, to which there can be no twisted "interpretation"!

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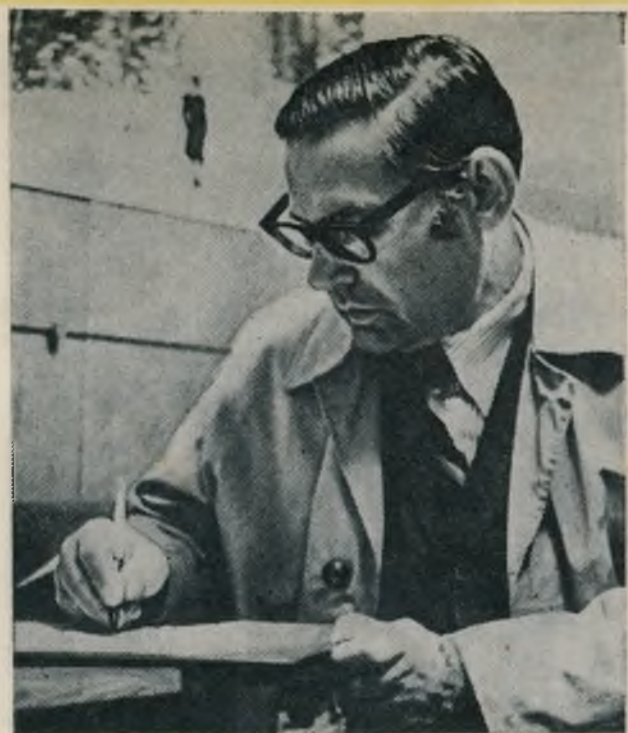
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phillip Bonosky was born in 1916 in Duquesne, Pennsylvania. His parents were Lithuanian immigrants who came to America in 1900; his father worked as a steel worker in the Duquesne Steel Works all his life. Bonosky was educated in the local Duquesne schools, and then spent two years at Wilson Teachers College in Washington, DC. He worked in the Duquesne Steel Works, was an active member of the steelworkers union, and in Washington, DC, during the thirties he was head of the Workers' Alliance, a union of unemployed and WPA workers.

Bonosky's first story was published in Story Magazine in 1942, followed by stories in *Collier's*, *Tomorrow*, *Liberty*, etc. His first novel was published in 1952. He has published six books altogether. He has been an editor of the Marxist cultural monthly, *Mainstream*, and from 1968 to 1974, the cultural editor of the *Daily World*. He became that paper's Moscow correspondent in 1978.

His books and articles have been translated into a variety of languages. Bonosky has traveled widely, including China, North Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, as well as the socialist countries of Europe.

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