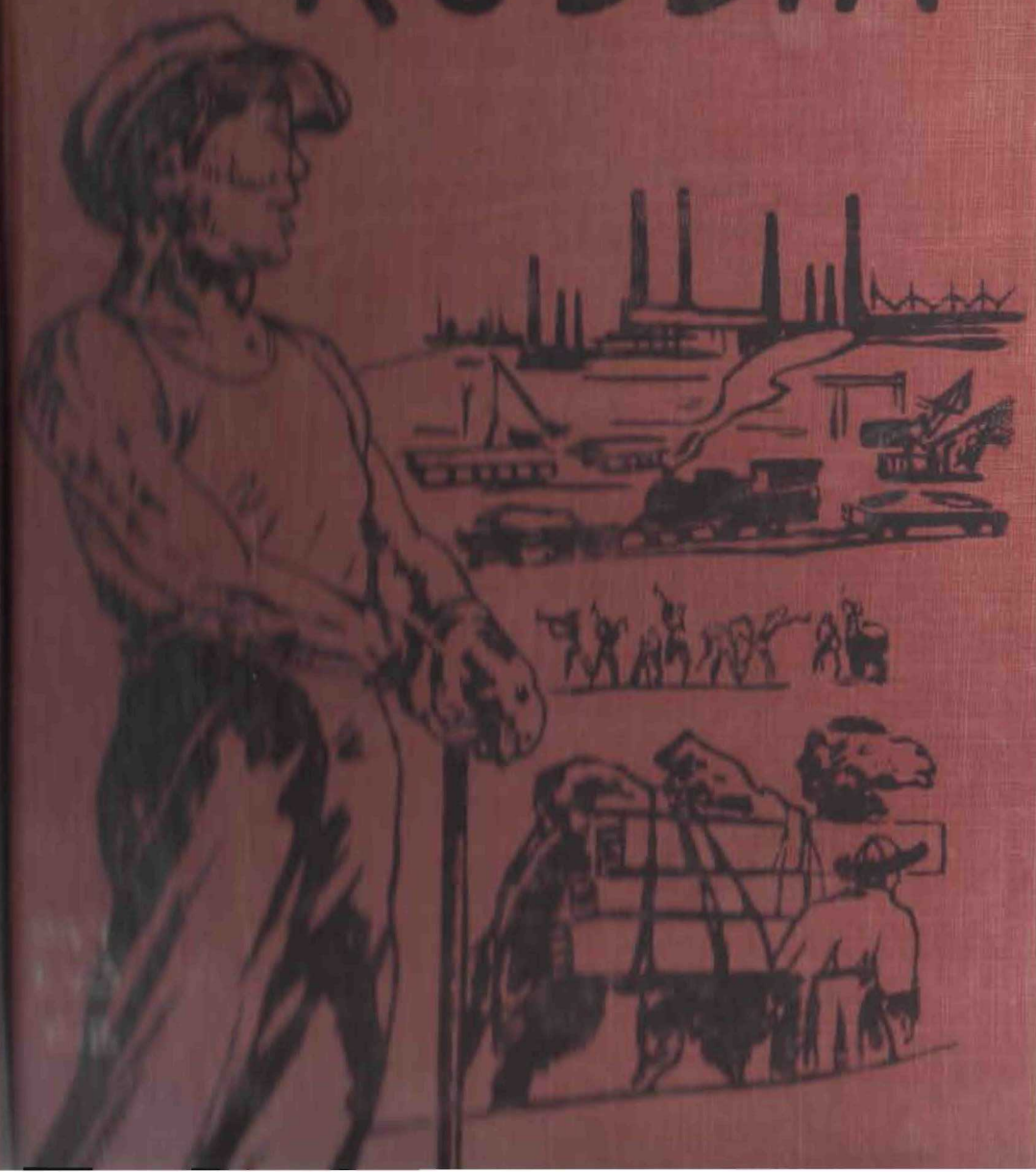
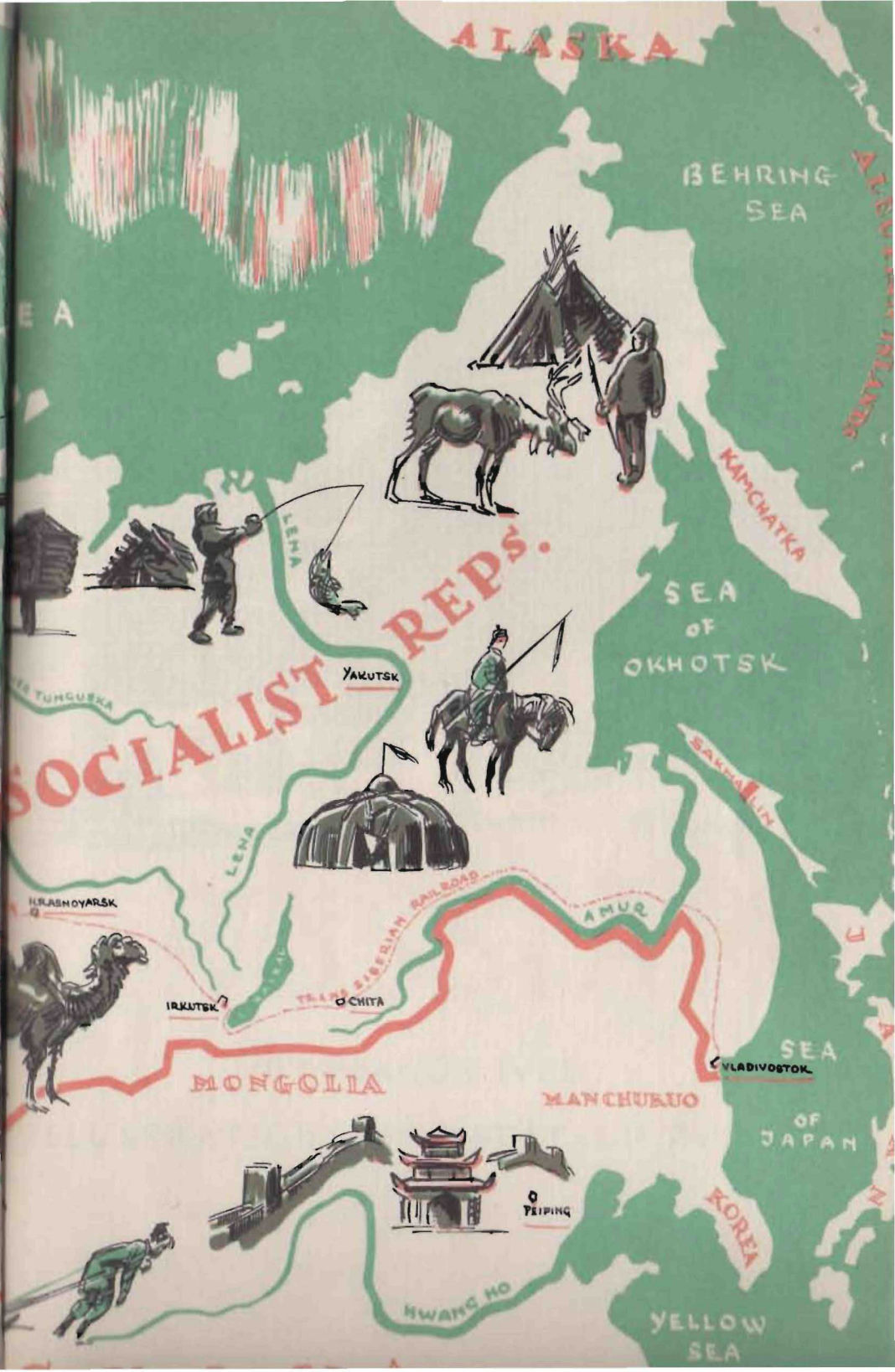
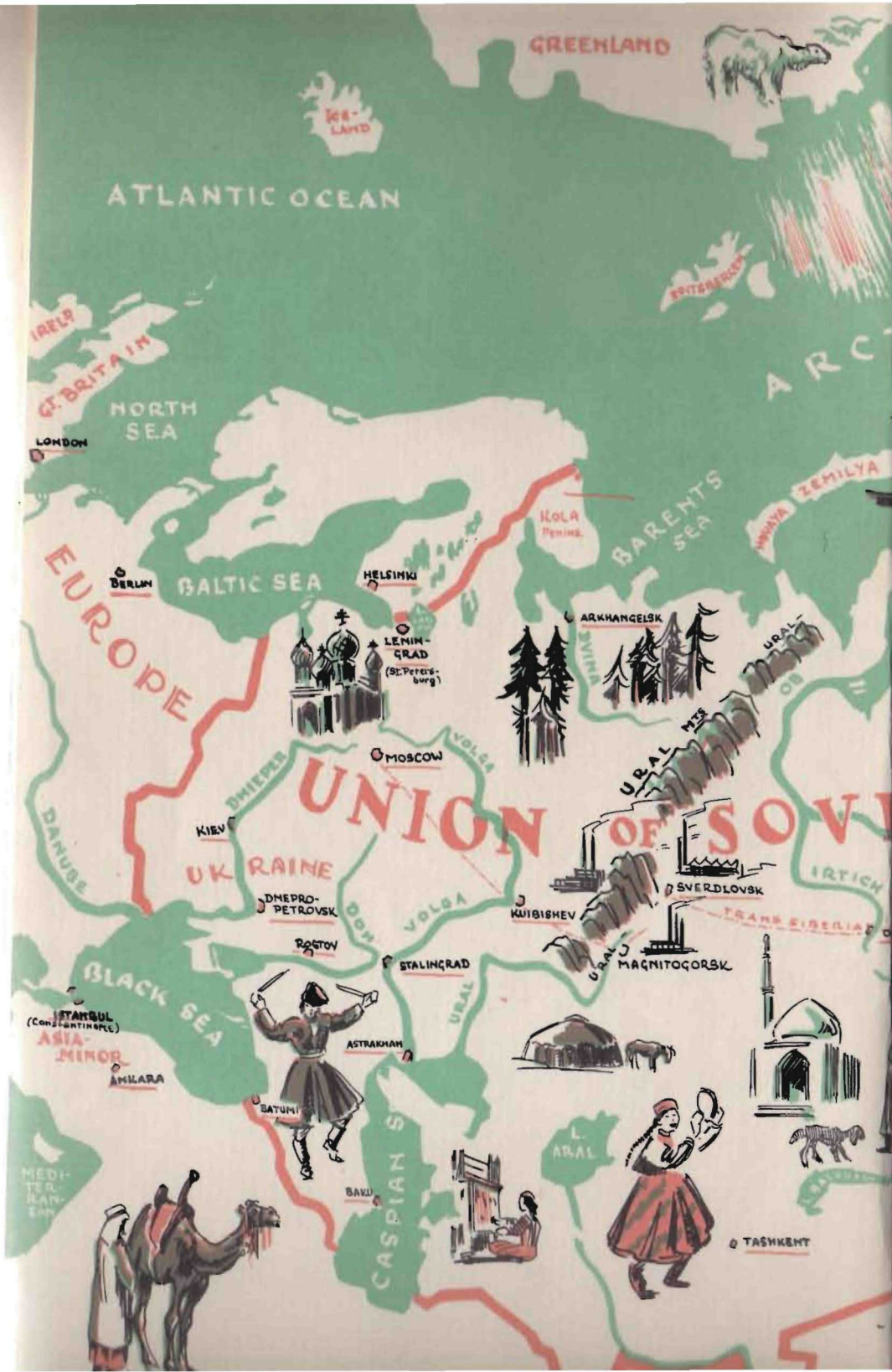


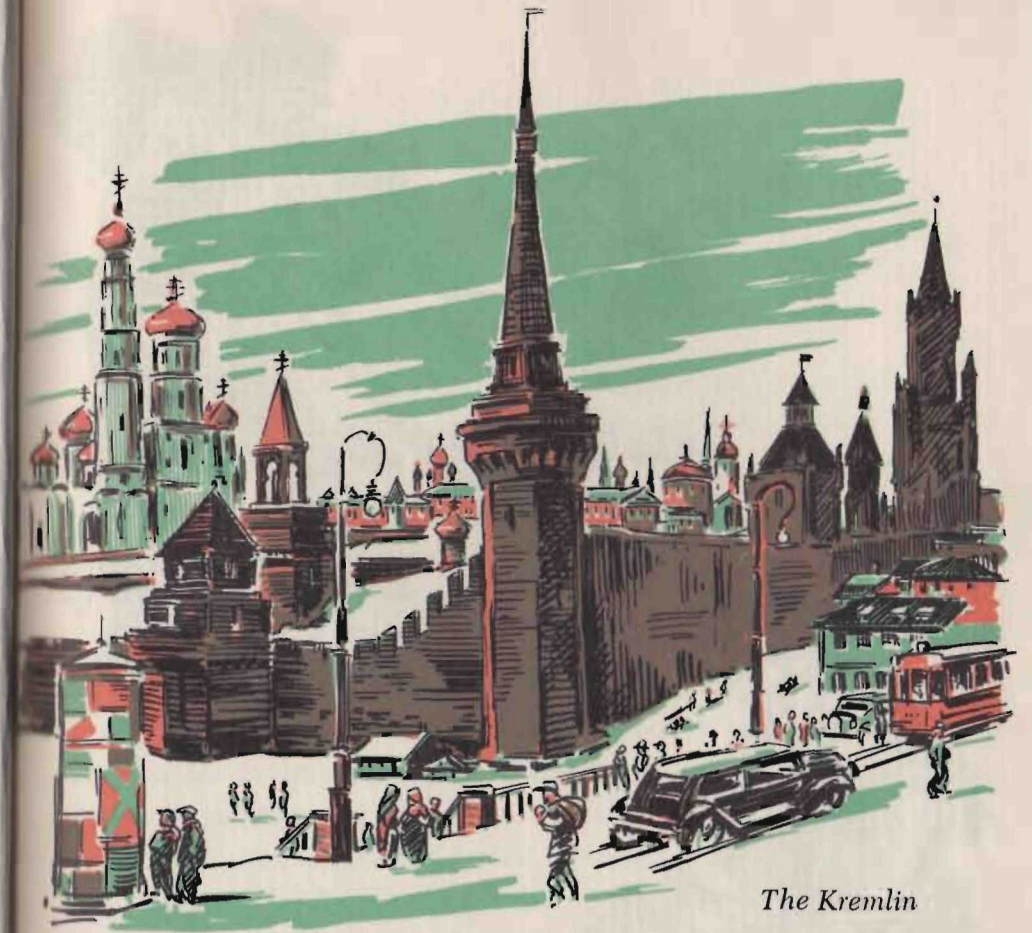
RUSSIA

RUSSIA 1900s



By [illegible]





The Kremlin

RUSSIA

BY VERNON IVES

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAFAELLO BUSONI

HOLIDAY HOUSE



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Russia is the New World of the Twentieth Century. Just as the United States was the growing giant among nations in the last half of the last century, so was Russia in the first half of the present. Just as our westward expansion from the Mississippi to the Pacific created cities and farms, mines and factories, railroads and ranches, so did Russia's eastward progress from the Ural Mountains to the Pacific. Except that the Russian giant is nearly three times the size of the United States—larger than the whole North American continent. Except that there are half as many people again in Russia as there are in the United States—and they speak more than one hundred and fifty different languages. Except that Russia has a far more rigorous climate to overcome—three-quarters of her land lies farther north than the border between the United States and Canada. Except that Russia did not have a heritage of free people in a young and vigorous country, as we did.

For Russia is an old, old country, with a history of war and poverty, slavery and hunger. A thousand years ago a band of Vikings came down from the north and set themselves up as rulers over the Slavic tribes who lived in the rich land of the Dnieper valley. On this river they established their capital, Kiev, and down this river they took cargoes of furs, honey, and slaves, across the Black Sea to Constantinople. From this center of the Byzantine Empire they brought back Christianity, in the form of the Greek Orthodox religion.

But in the middle of the Thirteenth Century the Mongol warriors of Genghis Khan swept westward across Asia like a great plague, and for two hundred years the Russians were under the rule of the Golden Horde. Kiev was destroyed, and only the timbered backwoods town of Moscow, in the north, kept Russian sovereignty alive. But the Mongols were fighters, not colonizers; they grew soft and careless as the years of peace went by. By 1500 their power had been broken, and the descendants of the Viking rulers were back on the throne of Moscow, the new capital. The Russia of the Czars was beginning.

It was not an easy task to restore the state. On the north were the Finns and the inhospitable Arctic. On the east were the Ural Mountains, which divided Europe from Asia, and beyond them the unknown stretches of Siberia. From the east and south the Mongol ex-rulers still made destructive raids. On the west, toward Europe

Scouts of the Golden Horde



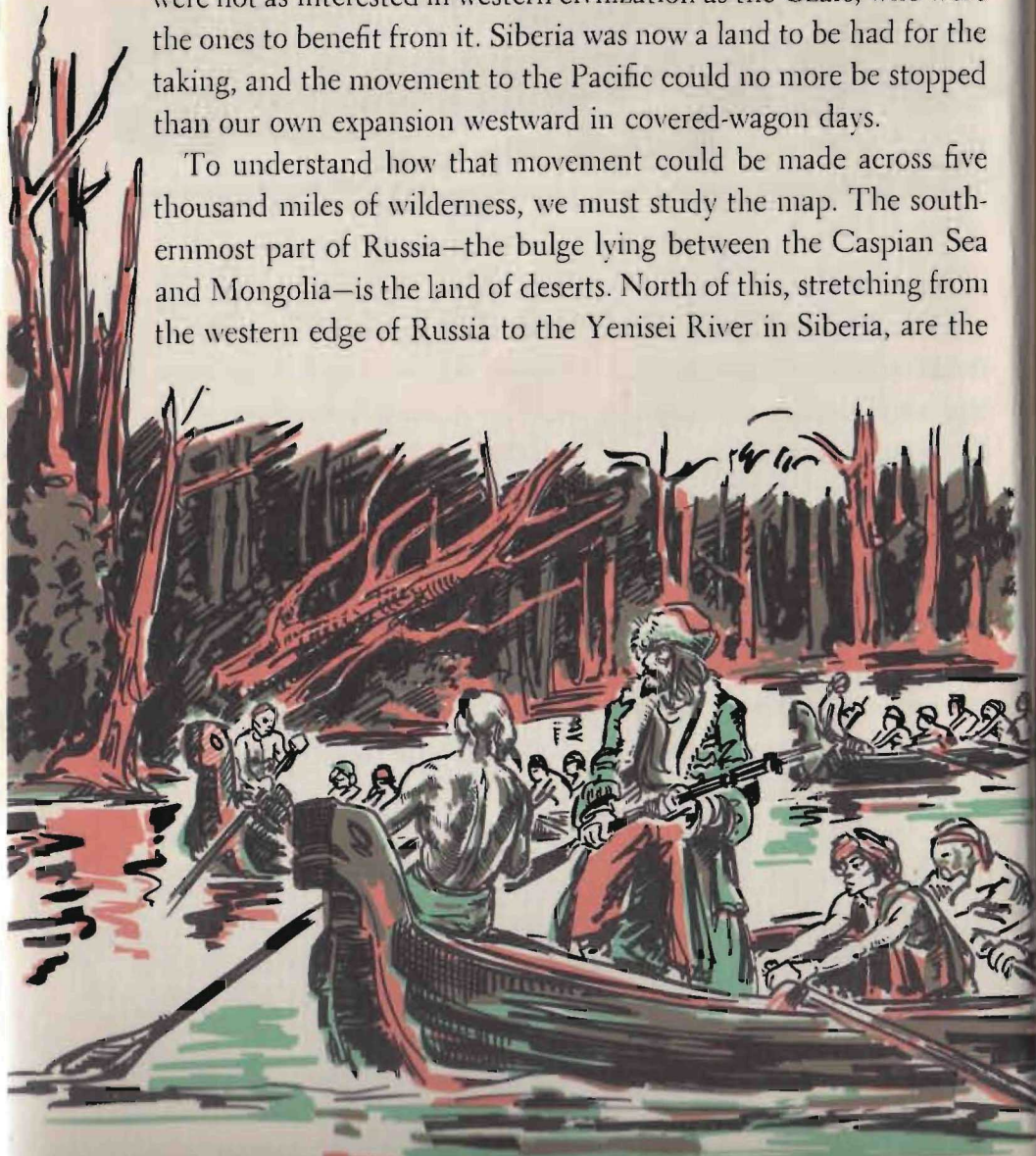
Early Moscow

and the civilized world, the Poles had been steadily extending their power, until they controlled the valley of the Dnieper and the rich black land of the Ukraine. But if Russia was surrounded by enemies, it had a natural stronghold in Moscow, its very heart. This heart had vital arteries in the three great southward-flowing rivers of European Russia—the Dnieper, the Don, and the Volga. Located at the sources of these three arteries, Moscow could pump its life blood through any or all of them. That it did so to good effect was proven at the end of the Sixteenth Century. Then the last descendant of the Viking ruling family died, and in the confusion that followed the Poles seized control of the government. But the Russians were then too strong to be ruled by a foreign power, and in 1613 chose a Czar of their own. This was the beginning of the House of Romanov, which was to rule for three hundred years.

Geographically, Europe and Asia are not two continents, but one, with Russia stretching across the single land mass, from the Baltic to the Pacific. But in peoples, languages, civilizations, and religions they are very different. Through all its history Russia has been pulled toward both. The members of the original Russian state were

Slavs, as are most of the people of central Europe. By ties of race, culture, and trade they were drawn together. But the Mongol invasion cut them off from Europe for two hundred years, and turned them to the east. When the Tartar power was broken, the Czars faced Russia west again—in 1703 Peter the Great even built a new capital at St. Petersburg (now Leningrad). But the Russian people were not as interested in western civilization as the Czars, who were the ones to benefit from it. Siberia was now a land to be had for the taking, and the movement to the Pacific could no more be stopped than our own expansion westward in covered-wagon days.

To understand how that movement could be made across five thousand miles of wilderness, we must study the map. The southernmost part of Russia—the bulge lying between the Caspian Sea and Mongolia—is the land of deserts. North of this, stretching from the western edge of Russia to the Yenisei River in Siberia, are the



steppes—flat, treeless grasslands not unlike our own prairies. This country of the nomads was and is a land of herds and grain. North again are the forests. From the Baltic to the Pacific they march in endless acres, and cover an area far larger than the entire United States. Farthest north of all is the tundra—treeless wastes of marshes that are a mass of flowers during the short summers and an unbroken expanse of white in the long winters. Underneath, the ground is eternally frozen.

These east-west belts of Russia's natural features were one reason for the irresistible movement across Siberia; forest-dwellers felt no strangeness in a distant forest, nor steppe-dwellers in a remote steppe. The rivers were another. As we have seen, the great rivers of European Russia flow to the south. Beyond the Urals are three even greater rivers that flow to the north, and a fourth, in the far east, that empties into the Pacific. The tributary streams of these four rivers, winding through the timbered heart of Siberia, form an almost continuous waterway. By going from the headwaters of the Ob to the Yenisei, from the Yenisei to the Lena, and from the Lena to the Amur, one can virtually paddle across Siberia.

So we see that there was not only a similarity of country from west to east, but an easy means of transportation. Moreover, there was a rich reward for the pioneer. The forests east of the Urals were teeming with fur-bearing animals, and in the poorly heated Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries fur was as precious as gold. And there were no mountain barriers, as in the United States. The only features of Siberia that are not enormous are its mountains.

Nor were leaders for the eastward movement lacking. Back in the days of the struggles with the Mongols, Moscow had devised a means of forcing both taxes and military service from its peasants. The bolder serfs, resentful of these compulsory duties, had fled beyond the reach of organized government, and settled on the

lower stretches of the Dnieper, Don, and Volga, in the no-man's land between the Russians and the Tartars. There they had no laws but their own. These fiercely independent, hard-riding outlaws were called Cossacks. Generations later they were to become the finest soldiers of the imperial Czars, known throughout the world by their high sheepskin caps, long-skirted coats, and crossed cartridge belts. Even in the Seventeenth Century they were famed as leaders, and naturally played a large part in the opening up of Siberia. It was a Cossack who defeated the Mongol Khan of Siberia. It was a Cossack who ventured north on the mighty Lena River in far eastern Siberia, sailed through the icy Arctic, and discovered that open water separated Russia from America. It was a Cossack who followed the Amur River east until it emptied into the Pacific. Cossack leadership led the Russian pioneers across Asia in less than fifty years.

And yet the Czars never quite knew what to do with their vast Asiatic empire. Since they wanted Russia to be a *European* nation, they looked upon Siberia principally as a source of wealth from the fur trade, and later as a prison for enemies whom they feared at



Cossacks of the Czar



home. Peter the Great, one of the few Czars with the mind and energy of a true leader, devoted his talents to forcing Russia more into Europe. True, he tried to establish trade with China and Japan, and sent out the expedition that was to give the name of its leader to Behring Sea. But these were minor incidents in a busy career. Peter was much more interested in fighting Sweden, Turkey, and Persia; in building St. Petersburg, his "window on Europe"; in introducing science and industry; above all, in making Russia a great power, wherein everyone's first duty was to the state. Since such a Russia could be maintained only with a great army and navy, everyone paid for them in taxes and services—the peasants most of all. For a hundred years, since the days of Ivan the Terrible, these serfs had not been free to come and go as they liked. Now they

had no freedom at all. They were slaves, forced to fight, or work in factory or field, when and where they were told.

Peter the Great set a pattern for the Czars that were to follow him; a pattern of war and peasant labor. In the hundred and fifty

Eighteenth Century Church



years following his death in 1725, Russia fought the Poles, the Germans, the French, the Turks, the Swedes, the Hungarians, and the English. After the poor showing made by Russia in the Crimean War, Czar Alexander II tried to reorganize the Imperial State, and better the lot of the common people. In 1861, two years before

the Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in the United States, the Russian serfs were given their liberty. With it they were given part of the land that they had been working for their former owners. But the land was not given to the individual; it was given to groups of peasants, and the groups were held responsible for payment. Thus the freed serf still owned no land of his own, and the inevitable revolution had only been delayed.

It was delayed again after the war with Japan in 1904-5, when Nicholas II, last of the Czars, was forced to form a representative parliament, called the Duma. But it was too late. In the three hundred years of their rule, the Romanov Czars had time and time again suppressed all liberal thinking, all real attempts to make the serfs free men. Nobody believed that the Duma would work, and it was destined to last too short a time to prove itself.

That was the state of affairs when Russia entered the first World War in 1914. Again the Czars proved that their rule of the huge country was ineffective. For all its individual courage, the Russian army was badly led and so poorly equipped that four million men were lost in the first year of the war. Month after month went by, with the army suffering defeats for lack of the supplies that never came, and the people behind the lines becoming hungrier and more discouraged. In March, 1917, the whole structure collapsed, and the Revolution was on.

Revolution

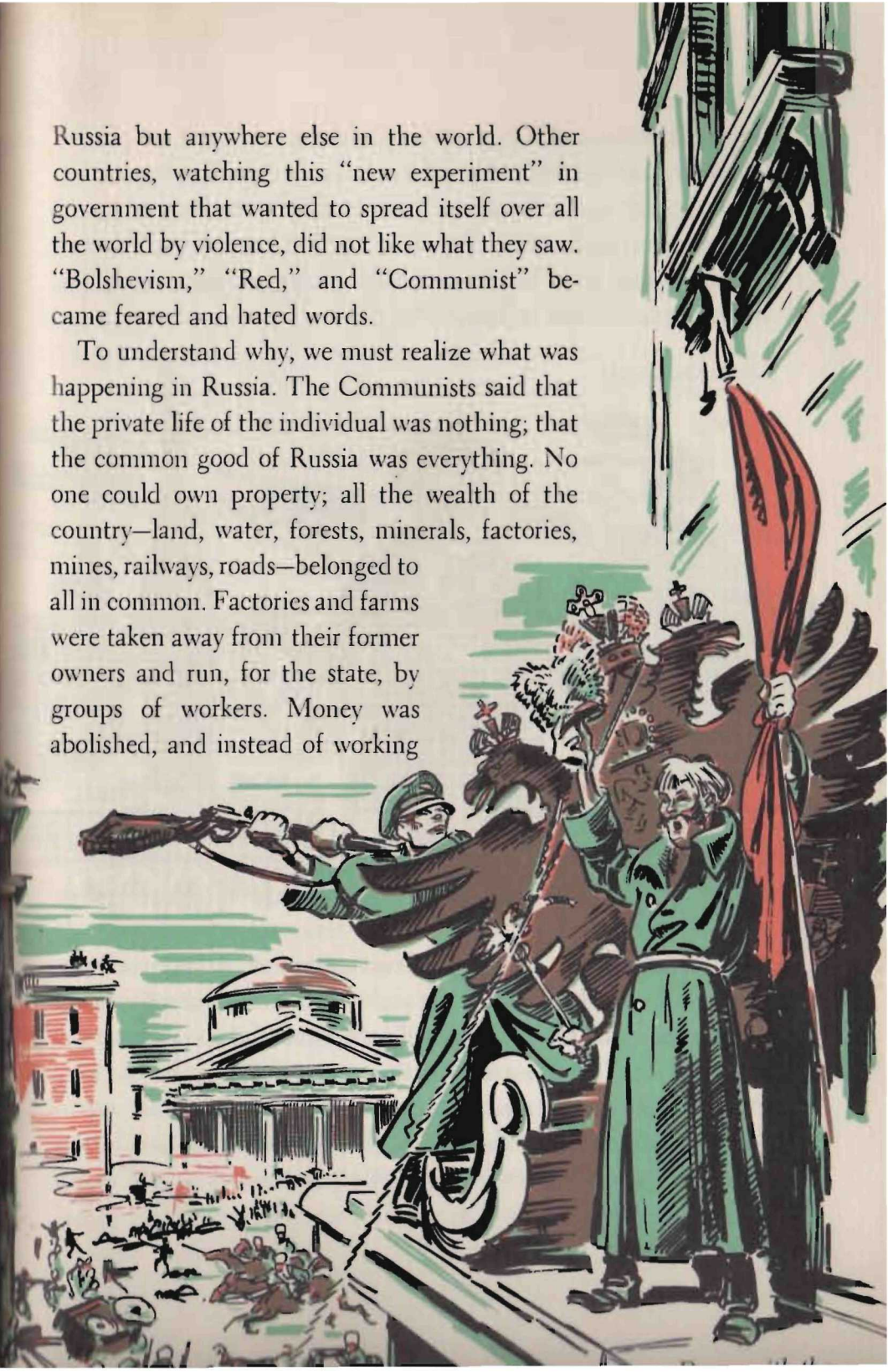
Like the American and French Revolutions, the Russian Revolution was a time of confusion, bitterness, and blood. All real authority was gone, and while each political group was trying to seize control of the government and the disorganized army, groups of peasants took what they wanted: food, clothing, money, homes, lives. By the end of the year the peasants had looted and destroyed the work of years; the government was in the hands of the Bolsheviks. These Communists, as they later came to be called, were only one of the revolutionary parties, and a small one. But they had a plan, a program for carrying it out, and one of the greatest leaders of modern times, Nikolai Lenin. The Russia of the Soviets had begun.

It was not an easy beginning. The largest country in the world was in chaos. Government, industry, transportation, food supply, even daily lives, had completely broken down. The country was still at war with Germany and Austria, and when peace did come, Russia lost the territory now known as Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and, for a time, the Ukraine. Rival groups, some of them supported by Russia's former allies, were trying to overthrow the Communists. The mass of the people were confused, ignorant, unskilled, and spiritless from months of war and generations of repression under the Czars. Nor were they at all sure that the new government would be any better than the old one—if it could last.

But Lenin and his party were sure; sure that the overthrow and seizure of the government by the people would work not only in

Russia but anywhere else in the world. Other countries, watching this “new experiment” in government that wanted to spread itself over all the world by violence, did not like what they saw. “Bolshevism,” “Red,” and “Communist” became feared and hated words.

To understand why, we must realize what was happening in Russia. The Communists said that the private life of the individual was nothing; that the common good of Russia was everything. No one could own property; all the wealth of the country—land, water, forests, minerals, factories, mines, railways, roads—belonged to all in common. Factories and farms were taken away from their former owners and run, for the state, by groups of workers. Money was abolished, and instead of working



for wages, Russians were to work for nothing, and in return receive what they needed free. This tremendous change in a way of life was too great, and too sudden. Mistakes had to be corrected, and new plans made. In the midst of this period Lenin died. His had been the great plan, but the carrying out of that plan was left to the strong leadership of Joseph Stalin.

Lenin and Stalin



While as ardent a believer in Communism as Lenin, Stalin was less interested in spreading it throughout the world than he was in proving how well it could work at home. Under his sponsorship the famous Five Year Plans came into being. The purpose of these Plans, which were worked out in advance to the last detail, was to change ignorant, unskilled, agricultural Russia into a literate, trained, industrial Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. And it was to be done at top speed.

Before we see how it was done, we must again look at the map. For all of Russia's great size, the Czars had depended on European Russia for farms and factories. The best farms were in the Ukraine, and they were mostly worked by crude wooden ploughs. Factories, and the iron and coal that supplied them, were near St. Petersburg, Moscow, or between the Dnieper and Don Rivers in the south. The natural resources of the Urals and parts of Siberia were known, but poor transportation, lack of skilled workmen, and Imperial indifference had combined to neglect them. Furthermore, Czarist industry had not only been inefficient, but so near rival countries of Europe that it was in constant danger of capture or destruction in time of war. The Soviets decided that their new industry would not have all its eggs in one basket; it would be spread over many parts of the country.

Americans are used to doing big jobs, and doing them fast. But the First Five Year Plan (1928-32), and the Second and Third that followed, was a bigger job than Americans were ever called upon to do. No nation in history ever did so much so fast. The Soviets wanted to replace wooden ploughs with modern farm machinery, and candles with electric lights. They wanted to educate nearly two hundred million people, of whom only one in four could read or write. They wanted to weld one hundred and fifty different peoples into one united nation, and yet let each keep its own characteristics. They wanted to dig mines, build cities and dams and steel mills, plant crops, lay railway ties, manufacture locomotives and airplanes, tractors and trucks, in regions that had known nothing but the most primitive kind of life. How was it to be done?

First, electrification. Lenin had considered that the first need of the New Russia, for it would benefit factories, farms, and homes alike. Almost before the Revolution was over, power plants were being built wherever there was fuel or water to supply them. The



The Dnieper Dam

greatest achievement was on the lower reaches of the Dnieper River, where a huge dam was constructed, and a hydro-electric plant built that alone supplied more power than all the plants of Czarist days together. It was a symbol of Soviet progress, and one of the bitterest blows of the second World War was the necessity of blowing it up to keep it out of the hands of the Nazis.

Next, the farms. The old, primitive methods, which had not produced enough food and had misused the land, were to be thrown out entirely. Huge state farms, hiring workers as a factory would, were to experiment with new methods, machinery, fertilizers, crops, and educate peasants in the use of them. Thousands of collective farms, each with several hundred families, were to elect their own leaders, divide into groups for producing grain, vegetables, milk,

or live stock, and cooperatively use machinery supplied by the state. Not only was this system to produce more food, but it was supposed to do it with fewer people, in order to free former farmers for work in the new industries that were being developed at the same time.

The plan almost failed. Most peasants were slow to learn new ways and clumsy with machinery. The wealthier peasants, who had owned farms of their own, fought against the idea of losing them to the state, and being forced to work on collective farms. But the state had no regard for the individual. Those who would not submit were ruthlessly sent to far-off prison camps or construction jobs. And there were crop failures, when millions of people died from starvation. But whatever the cost, however harsh the means and different from our way of life, the fact remains that the collective farms worked. Twenty years after the Revolution, Soviet farms were producing twice as much food as those of Czarist Russia ever had. And less than half the population were doing it, instead of the three-quarters required formerly. Millions of farmers had been released to the new industries. Furthermore, the collective farms had schools and hospitals, libraries and newspapers, electric lights and radios. The old Russian village was gone forever.

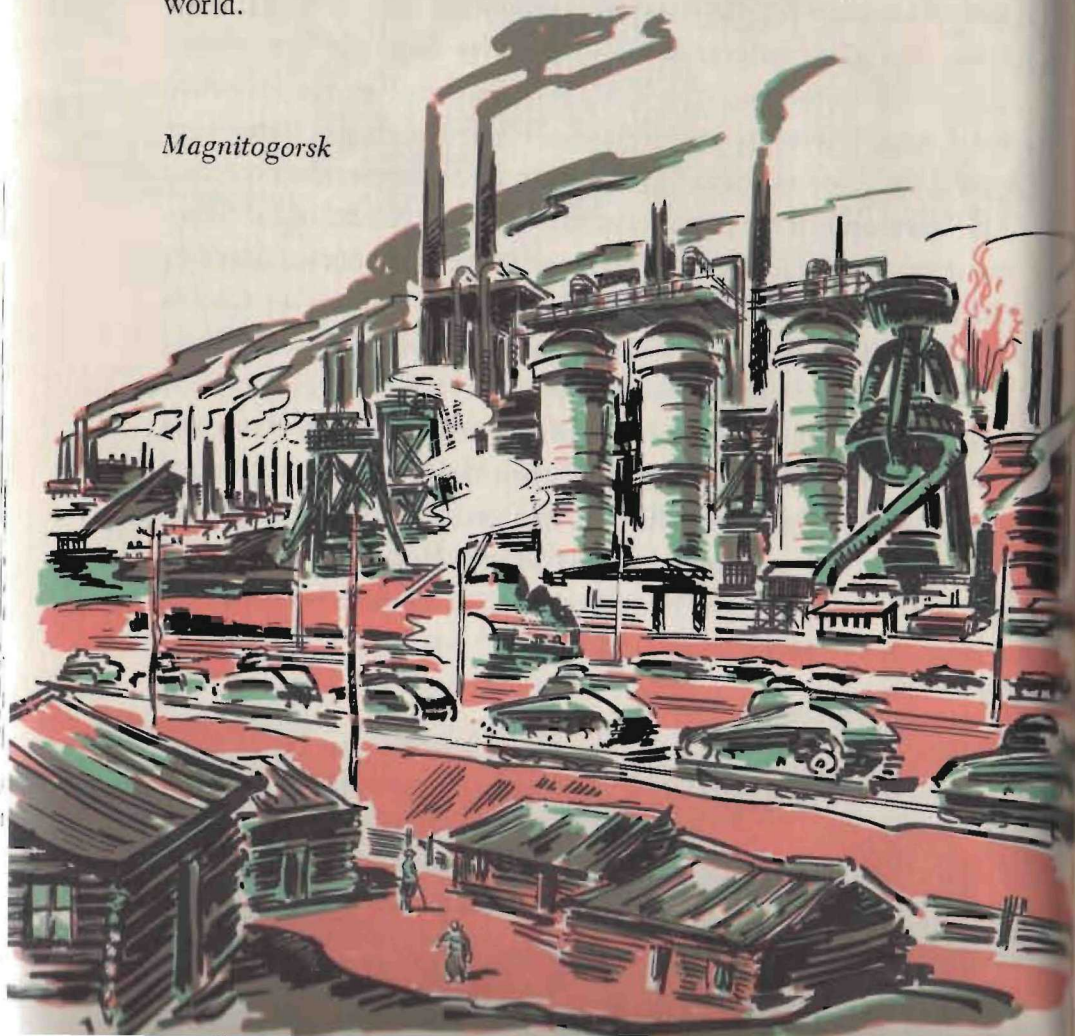
And what about industry? According to the Five Year Plans, the First was to turn out machines that in the Second would make things that in the Third the Russians could use and enjoy. The Third Plan was interrupted by the second World War, but if it had not been for the first two Plans, the war would have gone very differently for the Russians—and for us.

A Collective Farm



Perhaps the most dramatic story of Russia's new industry is that of Magnitogorsk. In the Ural Mountains, a thousand miles to the east of Moscow, was a smooth peak known as Magnitogorsk, or the Magnetic Mountain, from the amount of iron it contained. As far back as the Eighteenth Century, it had been given away as a personal gift from the Czarina to one of her friends. Each year a few hundred tons of ore were dug out and carried away by sled. But the wandering herdsmen who fed their cattle on the sparse grass of the valley paid little attention. They did not know that the Magnetic Mountain was 50% iron, and one of the richest deposits in the world.

Magnitogorsk



In 1928 the Soviets moved in, taking measurements, making plans. The following year a railroad pushed up to the mountain, and trainloads of equipment, supplies, and workmen poured in. Three years later a dam had been thrown across the Ural River, blast furnaces and coke ovens were already in operation, and 100,000 people were busily building more, and talking about it in thirty different languages. American engineers were rubbing elbows with Ukrainian peasants who had resisted seizure of their land and were serving out their sentences. Descendants of the Mongols, who had never used a hammer, were learning to become electricians. Steam shovels and camels were working in the same excavations.

It was a tremendous achievement, and built at a tremendous cost of hard work and sacrifice. Living accommodations were hastily and poorly constructed. Food and clothing were scarce. There were no conveniences. Unskilled workers learned slowly, ruined machinery, and injured themselves. Bitter winter temperatures of 30° and 40° below froze faces and hands and caused more accidents. But the work went doggedly on, until the annual Magnitogorsk pig iron output became nearly half as much as the entire amount in Czarist days.

Another typical industrial development was the Kuznetsk region, 1300 miles farther east, and nearly halfway across Russia. Here immense coal deposits were found—enough to supply the entire world for three hundred years. Iron at Magnitogorsk, coal here. So the Soviets built steel mills in each region, shipped freight cars full of coal to Magnitogorsk, and brought them back full of iron. Each region thus became an important new steel center, safely removed from the dangers of European Russia.

And so it went. New crops, new minerals, new industries, new cities were developed all over Russia. From the Kola Peninsula, next to northern Finland and the Arctic Ocean, came phosphates for

fertilizers and iron for Leningrad's factories. From the Caucasus, between the Black and Caspian Seas, came cement and synthetic rubber. From the steppes of Central Asia came vast quantities of oil and coal and copper, silk and wool, and millions of yards of cotton cloth, woven in local mills from local cotton enriched by local commercial fertilizers. From the Ural Mountains, near Magnitogorsk, came minerals, chemicals, steel, and the tools of industry made from them, including thousands of tractors from the biggest plant in the world. From the great forest in central Siberia came timber and furs, and reports of new treasures in the earth yet to be developed. From the cities along the Trans-Siberian Railway came still more: gold and silver and tin from the region around Lake Baikal; oil and gasoline, textiles, fish and food from the Maritime Provinces on the Pacific. All these developments made it clear that Russia was the greatest remaining treasure house of the earth, having a fifth of the world's known supply of coal and iron, a third of the forests, half the oil, and the largest rich-soil area, besides vast regions in the north and east awaiting exploration.

To make these riches available will take many years, for the distances involved are immense. But it will be done, for most regions are traversed by Russia's network of rivers, that are both sources of power and means of transportation. Already the Soviets have more than doubled the length of navigable waterways. A canal has been cut through the Karelian Peninsula, linking the Baltic Sea to the Arctic Ocean. Another joins Moscow to the Volga River, so that boats from Russia's capital can now go to the Arctic, the Baltic, or the Caspian.

Where waterways do not go, railroads and airlines can. The Trans-Siberian Railway, stretching 4700 miles from the Urals to Vladivostok, was double-tracked to allow extra traffic. Another railroad was built linking it to Central Asia, and still another, that

swung far north of Lake Baikal, into the forests of Siberia, and thence to the Pacific. A network of airlines was flung across the country. By following the mighty rivers of Siberia north, some of these lines linked the rivers and the Arctic to the more industrial south.



Arctic Expedition

For the Arctic Ocean is no longer an unknown, desolate waste. The long-sought Northeast Passage, goal of intrepid explorers for centuries, is now an accomplished fact. In 1878-9 a Scandinavian explorer completed the passage across the top of the world, and reached the Pacific. But nothing practical was done until the Soviets incorporated the problem in their Five Year Plans. Along the 3000-mile route observation posts were established. From these weather forecasts are sent by radio; airplanes fly over, reporting the best passages through the ice; giant icebreakers go out to clear the way for freighters. During the Second Five Year Plan more than a million tons of cargo were carried along the Northeast Passage, some of it the full 7000 miles from Murmansk to Vladivostok. This route

is now open only three months of the year. But with improved techniques, and the spur of more and more freight coming down the great Siberian rivers, the Arctic will become increasingly important.

This is no idle hope. The Soviets, determined to explore and develop every part of the country, have spared no pains to bring every known means of science to the Arctic problem. In 1937 a group of their scientists flew to the North Pole, set up a radio station and scientific instruments, and drifted with the ice for nearly a year, constantly studying Arctic conditions. At the same time Soviet airmen made two long-distance flights across the North Pole to the United States. No one yet knows how soon the roof of the world will be the scene of routine commercial flights. But the Russians have shown the way. Their pioneering has hastened the day when the United States and Russia will no longer be on opposite sides of the world, but close polar neighbors. Close neighbors should be good friends.

That people of different stock, education, language and religion can live together in one united nation has been proven by the Soviet Union no less than the United States, which in many ways are remarkably alike. Three-quarters of the nearly 200 million Russians are Slavs—a blond, friendly, progressive, sport-loving, machine-minded people that have dominated European Russia and pushed eastward to the Pacific. But since the days when Stalin himself was the first Commissar for Minor Nationalities, they have seen to it, that their less populous fellow citizens have lost no rights merely on account of their non-Slavic origin. They may be Turco-Tartars of Central Asia, in whose Moslem veins flows the blood of the Golden Horde; Buriats of Lake Baikal, who are Buddhists and Mongols; Jews, who were living in the valley of the Dnieper a thousand years ago, and now have a state of their own in far-eastern Siberia; Tadzhiks, pure Aryans tucked between their Moslem neigh-



Caucasian



Turkmen



Slav



Mongol



Siberian

bors and the tallest mountains in the world; Caucasians, whose culture goes back 5000 years; Yakuts, semi-primitive nomads who raise reindeer on the Lena River and the frozen shores of the Arctic. Whoever they are, their language is respected, their culture honored. They have their rights—and their responsibilities.

As citizens, they have an equal share in the government. The Soviet Union is made up of sixteen member republics, similar to our states, and several regions and areas, similar to our territories and dependencies. These political divisions have been made in accordance with the nationalities of the inhabitants, and each one has equal rights of representation, regardless of size, in the Soviet of Nationalities, just as each American state is entitled to the same representation in our Senate. Similarly, the Soviet of the Union corresponds to our House of Representatives, with members elected according to the population of the political divisions. And as the American Senate and House of Representatives form our Congress, so the Soviet of Nationalities and the Soviet of the Union together make up the Supreme Soviet. This Supreme Soviet meets twice a year to pass laws and elect the Presidium, a much smaller body that is responsible when the Supreme Soviet is not in session. This has no counterpart in the United States. The actual administration of government is carried out by the Council of Peoples' Commissars, headed by Premier Stalin. As in our Cabinet, its members are in charge of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Railways, Defense, and the like. A similar form of local government exists in the various republics, and on down through regions, districts, towns, and villages.

The United States has what is called the two-party system of government, where a voter may belong to either of the two major parties, or another one, or even form his own, if he likes. In Russia there is only one party—the Communist Party—and citizens are forbidden to join or form any other. As a matter of fact, very few

Russians belong to the Communist Party. Party members are carefully chosen and highly trained for their work, and membership is an honor eagerly sought. Many small government positions are held by non-party Russians, but almost all important posts are filled by Communists. In effect, the Party is the government.

It is not the American way. We do not like the idea of only one political party running the country. We do not like the idea of no private ownership. We do not like the idea of all public information being controlled by the government. We do not like the idea of a system that stemmed from a theory of world revolution. Most of all, we do not like to be told what to do.

But we do admire people who get things done, as we do. We admire people who have made machines their servants, as we have. We admire people who have developed a vast new country, as we did. And we must remember that we, too, once overthrew an oppressive rule and set up our own government, as we thought it should be. We must remember that different men in different ways can, and, we hope, will, work for the common good. A way of life not one's own is not necessarily the wrong way.

This, however, has been very hard both for Russia and other countries to keep in mind. After World War II there grew between Russia and her former allies a distrustfulness that not even the United Nations could remove. Resulting disagreements put the entire world into a state of anxiety about another global war, one in which civilization itself might be destroyed. For people everywhere, though they clash on ways of life, recognize that civilization has at last come to a point where it can keep on growing only in the climate of peace.