

## THE RUSSIAN MENACE

by

**Dalton Trumbo**

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*Luckily for us, Mr. Trumbo finds time occasionally to write for SCRIPT, too, and when I went to his Beverly Hills colonial house with the tall pillars to collect the following piece, I found him, not with beads of perspiration pouring from his feverish brow in a mad effort to make a deadline, but holding his baby Melissa in his lap and merrily teaching her to say, "Da-da." Mrs. Trumbo was quite as merrily chiming in. So I accused him of being a phenomenon and asked him where he found time to do it all, and he said, "I guess it's because I'm strong." And when he saw me smiling at that he continued, "I'm healthy, and feel well." And when I rejected that answer, he further added, "And I just love to work."*

*Certainly his love of work doesn't interfere with the charm of the Trumbo family life, for with his son and daughter of school age, he's just one of the kids, and much younger than that when his daughter Melissa, looking as contented as a cherub, tucks into his arms.*

*Yes, Dalton Trumbo, master of many trades and tinker at none, is by way of being a Hollywood phenomenon, but more of this later on.—F.W.*

**I** ASKED MY friend, back after four years with the General Staff, mostly in England, whether he felt Great Britain was likely to sink to the level of a second-rate power. "There is only one second-rate power in the world," he replied, "and only one question: is it the United States or the Soviet Union?"



That such a question should ever be tested by force of arms seems fantastic: yet as the evidence accumulates and the American press campaign roars to its climax of anti-Soviet fury, one is forced to the conclusion that certain powerful segments of American life desire such a contest as quickly as possible, and are taking measures to bring it about. Responsible American Senators and congressmen have made public charges to this effect.

No sensible man would advocate stripping the United States of its defenses in one of the most troubled moments of world history. But there are sensible men all over the world who view American military power with increasing apprehension; who wonder just how far geographically our legitimate defensive needs may extend; who begin to sense and to dread the overwhelming pressure of American military might in every portion of the world.

If the statements of Bevin and Churchill, of Byrnes and Stettinius, of the American press and an alarming portion of the Congress are to be taken as valid, this widespread American military system is directed against one country: the Soviet Union. Let us, then, closely examine those specific points at which the Soviet Union threatens the security of the United States.

There are no Russian troops in the Pacific, save in the Kurile Islands, which have been returned to their original owners, and a token force in Japan. There are no Russian troops in the Atlantic, or in North America, or in South America, or in China, save in those portions of Manchuria currently being evacuated. There are no Russian troops in Malaya or Indonesia or India, or in the Middle East, or in the Mediterranean basin, or in Africa. There are no Russian troops on the Scandinavian Peninsula, or in the Northern Islands of Greenland and Iceland, or Western Europe—not even on Danish Bornholm. And there are no Russian troops anywhere in the world engaged in putting down the movements of Colonial peoples toward freedom.

There are no Russian forces dominating any of the great waterways of



*Dalton Trumbo*

the world—none at Gibraltar, none at the Dardenelles, none at either end of the Suez Canal, none at either end of the Kiel Canal, none at either end of the Panama Canal, none at the Baltic sea exit, none at Singapore or the Cape or the Horn. There is no Russian navy



about their relations with these neighboring states. They are determined that there shall be no governments there unfriendly toward the Soviet Union. This is precisely the policy the United States has always maintained in relation to Central and South America, where revolution after revolution has occurred at the direct instigation of American interests. The Russians have entered into a series of trade agreements with their bordering countries, just as we have entered into trade agreements with all nations of the Western Hemisphere. The Russians have also made reciprocal military agreements with many of their neighbors, precisely as we have done for years, and as President Truman announces we shall continue to do in the future with South America and Canada.

In the East we find the Russians gradually evacuating Manchuria. They have taken with them, as what they contend to be legitimate war booty, certain as yet undetermined quantities of heavy industrial equipment installed by the Japanese. As to China, we have the word of Madame Chiang Kai-Chek that it was exclusively the Soviet Union which supported China during the earliest and bitterest years of the Japanese war—the years during which Britain and America were sending scrap iron and oil in enormous quantities to Tokyo. In Korea we find the Russians and the Americans in the midst of a debate over definitions of democracy in the formation of a new government, which would seem natural enough. In Japan, although United



*Dalton Trumbo*

enough. In Japan, although United States authority is supreme, the Russians appear to object to the kind of election which enables a leader of the war party to receive the heaviest vote. It is possible also that the Russians have their doubts about the new Japanese Constitution, but no grave issue has been made over the point.

There have been difficulties in Iran, certain aspects of which the American press has played down or refused altogether to print. The northern portion of Iran was formerly Russian territory. It furnished an invasion route for allied and counter-revolutionary armies during the civil wars following the Soviet Revolution. This portion of Iran directly controls the great Russian oil fields of Baku, for which the battle of Stalingrad was waged. When the Soviet government ceded the territory to the Iranian government after the revolution, its action was based upon a treaty stipulating that former Czarist oil concessions in the ceded territory were not to be leased to any foreign power, and granting the Soviet Union the right to send troops into the territory in case of violation. Four times—the latest occurring in 1944—the Iranians negotiated to transfer the forbidden oil concessions to foreign powers. Four times the Soviet Union objected and caused cancellation of the proposed transfers.

The British have enormous oil concessions elsewhere in Iran, together with treaty rights to police the concessions—to maintain, in other words, a British army on Iranian territory under the guise of a company police force. The Americans are also deeply interested in Iranian oil. The Iranian National Police which is, in effect, another army, is under the command of the American Colonel H. Norman Schwartzkopf. It specializes in the goose-step when on parade. Thus, without going into the fine points of the UN dispute over Iran, now happily settled, it appears that there were two sides to the problem, only one side of which was presented by the American press. It is also unquestionable that Northern Iran is a strategically vital area to the security of Baku, in which



the Russians have as legitimate an interest as we have in the areas adjacent to the Panama Canal.

This, perhaps, sums up the Soviet menace to the United States, with one important exception: the doctrine of Communism itself, which existed long before the establishment of the Soviet Union, which is international in its nature and which, in the eyes of certain portions of the western world, represents a threat to the democratic-parliamentary system of government. For this presumed threat—and remember, the Russians for years have regarded our system of government as an armed threat to their own—for this presumed threat of Communism there is only one possible answer.

So long as the western democracies, based upon capitalism, are able to secure for their peoples progressive government, universal education, a rising standard of wages, adequate social security, equitable distribution of goods, freedom from racial, religious and political persecution—so long as western capitalism is able to provide these requisites of Twentieth Century culture it will never be confronted by a revolutionary crisis. Healthy economic systems do not fall before the assault of revolutionists. They survive by the satisfactory performance of their responsibilities to their people, and they fall because of failure to measure up to those responsibilities.

The Soviet Union, one can scarcely help observing, appears to rely upon the friendship of border states for her security, rather than upon the establishment of "defensive bases" throughout the world. The American policy is somewhat different. In addition to the friendship of border states—a point upon which we have always insisted—we possess air bases in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, in Pernambuco and Dakar, in Liberia and in the Azores and in Greenland, Iceland, some 3,500 miles from our shores, is an American defensive base although it is closer to the Soviet Union than to the United States. To the south of Russia, 7,000 miles from the United States and only 1,000 miles from Soviet borders, we are constructing an enormous airfield at Dhahran, by special arrangement with the Saudi Arabian government.



Turning to the Pacific we find the incredibly powerful naval bases of Oahu and Guam, with some of the largest airports in the world in the Marshalls, the Solomons, on Guam and Iwo Jima, throughout the Philippines and in Okinawa. For present emergencies we have full use of the Japanese home islands as our "window on Asia." We have the word of a Lt. General on MacArthur's staff that we are making of Japan "a fine ally."

In China our airfields and army bases extend from one end of that vast country to the other. An immense Chinese Army is being trained with American weapons by American officers. A large navy is being presented by us to the Chinese for use in Asiatic waters.

No Russian can turn his face east without being confronted with a solid wall of American air and naval power immediately contiguous to his country. He cannot turn his face south without encountering the iron curtain of British power from Singapore to the Red Sea and from Port Said to Gibraltar. He cannot turn his face west without running into the tremendous Atlantic power of the Anglo-American allies, including its complete domination of Africa and the Northwestern land masses. He cannot turn his face north without being conscious of Expedition Muskox which successfully explored the top of the world in the direction of the Soviet Union. And if, on some near summer night, he is awakened by the sound of an explosion, it will probably be that of the cataclysm which shortly will dissolve an American armada in Bikini Atoll.

If I were a Russian, I would be alarmed. If the situations were reversed, I, as an American, would be alarmed. I would be astounded to find Russian officers and material forging an army in Canada (China); Russian power on the move in Mexico (India, Malaya, the Middle East, North Africa); Russian air bases in Oahu and the Galapagos, in Panama and Cuba, in Brazil and the North Atlantic; a Russian expedition moving across the polar cap in the direction of Minnesota. I would be further alarmed if I were aware that the Russians had a navy greater than all other navies of the world combined, and the greatest



*Dalton Trumbo*

air force in the world, and the most destructive bomb, and the most powerful allies, and the greatest industrial capacity, and twenty-seven years of concentrated hatred carefully built up by a gloriously free and hostile press. I would be alarmed, and I would petition my government to take measures at once against what would seem an almost certain blow aimed at my existence.

That is how it must appear to a Russian today.

