man like all the Chinese in the camp. He was a friend of my friend Ho-Tsching. Ho-Tsching had a word with his countryman. That evening I stood outside the little window in the hospital lavatory. The Chinese appeared and said, "All is well."

I said to him, "Tell him not to eat anything today or tomorrow. The day after he can have a little milk. He's not to talk, and he's to go on urinating on the mattress."

The next day I allowed him two mugs of milk. Then, for a week, milk in larger quantities. After a week he began taking a little semolina. The first vowels started to come, followed by the first badly articulated syllables. Then the first clumsy stammered sentence that is heard in every hospital in the world, "I don't want to die."

He wouldn't die either. The doctors in sick quarters were proud of their successful treatment. When he got better they put him into a room with a number of genuine apoplectics. There Seryosha quickly picked up anything he didn't know already. He acted brilliantly.

In the whole of my experience as a doctor I can't remember ever having seen an apoplectic fit with quite such classical symptoms as Seryosha's.

A few weeks later, however, even Seryosha's performance was put in the shade. For Stalin himself was to manifest equally convincing symptoms. And his were not put on.

10

"Annus Mirabilis"

IN MARCH, 1953, came the event for which the prisoners in Vorkuta had been waiting for years with an intensity that must be almost without parallel in the annals of human desperation.

Stalin died of apoplexy.

This was not altogether unexpected. I well remember the way in which the prisoners in camp 9/10 followed the proceedings of the Nineteenth Congress of the Communist Party which took place in October, 1952. It was to be the last public demonstration of the might of Stalinism.

Everyone paid particular attention to the photographs, to the expression on Stalin's face and his general appearance.

"Why does he stay sitting down all the time when everyone else all round him is standing up? Can't he stand any more?"

With the fine instinct of the political prisoner they had sensed that the man sitting there was already half-dead.

At the end, to wind up the Congress, Stalin spoke himself. And what had the Communist dictator to say? Did he give us fiery slogans to inspire us in the building of the new society? His speech was short. It lasted only a few minutes. It contained nothing but a row of feeble platitudes.

The prisoners discussed it among themselves.

"He didn't speak any longer for the simple reason that he can hardly speak at all. He's an old man. How long will he last? One year? Two?"

The few photographs were examined over and over again.

"He looks old enough, let's hope it won't be long now."

They knew that so long as Stalin lived they had no chance of getting out of the hell in which they lived.

This Nineteenth Communist Party Congress gave new impetus to their hopes.

"He can hardly get a word out any more," said a Ukrainian from a collective farm. "Here you have a great occasion—they all make long speeches, and the mustache hardly says a word. He only speaks once and then just for a moment. He hasn't got it in him any more. He must be very old. God grant it won't be long now before the devil comes and carries him off."

When the announcement of the historic apoplexy came over the Radio Moscow, a great wave of hope surged through the camp. Surely he couldn't recover now. The tone of the medical bulletin was subdued and calculated to prepare people for the worst. The prisoners spent all their time round the loudspeaker. Four days went by, and the tension was increasing hourly. In the end it became clear that he had no hope of recovering even temporarily, as Lenin had done.

"Tell us, you're a doctor," people said to me. "What does it mean if he's being given oxygen? Can it make him better again?"

I told them that if what they were saying on the radio was true, he was probably already dead, and they weren't telling the people until they had formed a new government.

When the actual announcement of his death came, bearded *moujiks* with tears in their eyes went down on their knees and prayed.

"I've been in this camp nineteen years now," said one of the Georgians. "But this is the best news I've ever heard."

"God has saved the Jews," a Polish Zionist whispered to me. He had just managed to escape from the Gestapo in 1940, only to be sentenced to fifteen years in the Soviet Union. "If he hadn't died, there would have been pogroms again as bad as anything at the time of the Black Hundred, or Petljura, or Hitler."

I went out to fetch the hot water for my block and met an old Uzbek, a particular friend of mine, on the main street of the camp. He could only speak very little Russian and no German. I couldn't understand a word of Uzbek. He stopped in front of me. I clapped him on the back and he smiled at me. Then he started twisting an imaginary mustache, closed his eyes, put his head on one side, and placed one hand under his cheek.

"*Speet!* He sleeps!" he said.

He stood there smiling for a moment. Then he said, "*Chorosháw!* Good!"

Churchill's statement that the new men in the Kremlin had to be given a chance to show their good will and work out their policy in peace was featured prominently in *Pravda*. It caused the most profound dismay in the camps.

Seryosha came to look for me and said, "Have you read it?"

He was in despair.

"This is a unique chance," he said, "but only if the West seizes it. Now is the moment to attack the Kremlin from all sides and in every possible way. It's the only way to strengthen the position of the men in the Kremlin who want to come to an understanding with the West. It's quite false to think that a common danger has the effect of drawing a band of gangsters closer together. If you offer them the chance of surrender and

link it to the strongest possible ultimatum, you split them wide apart."

In the conversation that followed, Seryosha gave me his opinion of British policy toward the Soviet Union from 1917 onward.

"After all," he said, "it is the stupidity of the British which the Soviets have to thank for their existence . . ."

The gist of his argument was as follows:

It was Buchanan, the British ambassador in Moscow, who had been the midwife at the birth of Bolshevism. He had been Kerensky's "manager." Between February and October, 1917, the two of them had made every mistake they could possibly have made. They missed chance after chance of carrying out reforms. Buchanan saw Russian problems through British eyes. How could he be expected to think in terms of land reform? This alone would have been enough to bring the peasants round to Kerensky and make the October Revolution impossible. In exactly the same way they neglected the social reform that would have stopped the Social Democratic working classes from swinging to the extreme left.

If these two reforms had been carried out, the attempt to continue the war against Germany on the side of the Allies might have been successful. As it was, it acted as the last straw and finally assured the success of the October Revolution. Lenin triumphed with the two slogans, "Peace" and "Land for the Peasants."

Buchanan's policy ended with the shooting of the tsar and his family, for the British government had refused them asylum on the grounds that it didn't want to embarrass Kerensky's new democratic regime.

Suddenly, when it was too late, the British realized what they had done and tried to save what they could by sending an expedition to Archangel—a childish attempt, for by this

time Lenin had the peasants and the working classes firmly on his side.

Ten years later Stalin began his policy of trying to bring about a conflict between the Western Powers in Europe. This was to give the Soviet Union the chance of falling on the weakened combatants when it was over. We know now that he was playing with the idea even before Hitler came to power. After all, he could have stopped Hitler coming to power if he had wanted to, by ordering the German Communists to form a bloc with the Social Democrats against him. The British played straight into his hands by allowing Hitler to arm against the will of the French. Three years later they were forced to turn against the very man they had so generously supported.

In 1939 they were taken completely by surprise by the Non-Aggression Pact between Molotov and Ribbentrop. They still hadn't realized what their policy should have been, namely, to make a nonaggression pact with Germany themselves, turn Hitler's dreams of expansion eastward, let the war break out there, where it would have weakened both Hitler and Stalin, and prepare for both of them the fate Stalin had intended for Hitler and themselves.

Then again in 1944 they refused to recognize the existence of a widespread opposition movement inside Germany that was determined to get rid of Hitler and would have stood with the Western Allies against the Soviets.

"Since 1944," said Seryosha, "the West has been in possession of the atom bomb but hasn't used it. I expect the British are behind that somewhere too."

He looked at me for a moment and then said, "And now I read that the new men in the Kremlin 'are to be given a chance'! My God! The British will get all too good a chance of seeing what sort of football this new team plays if they give them time to train the men in peace. The West 'is giving the

Kremlin a chance,' but it'll pay for it dearly enough. If these new men are allowed to consolidate themselves, they'll be far more elastic and dangerous than Stalin ever was. His death has merely freed the policy of the Kremlin from the stubbornness of arteriosclerosis."

No sooner was Stalin dead than the camp began waiting for the system to collapse, and indeed the situation was more favorable for such a collapse than at any time during the last thirty years. All the necessary conditions were there. In his thirty years of rule Stalin had succeeded in building up an opposition on a scale without parallel in the history of Russia.

In the first place, the opposition of the peasants to the regime in Russia today is stronger and more widespread than in 1917. The slogan, "Land for the Peasants," is as effective as it ever was. The peasants' hatred of the Soviet system is as great as their hatred of the old land-owners. They realize perfectly well that they have been cheated of the fruits of the revolution.

Secondly, ever since the beginning of the first Five Year Plan, a large industrial proletariat has been developing in the Soviet Union and it is being forced to live under conditions similar to those endured by the European workingman in the early days of capitalism. This proletariat is just as discontented as its counterpart of a hundred years or so ago, and it has the same fundamentally hostile attitude to the existing order. The industrial workers, like the peasants, understand well enough what has happened to them. They see that the dictatorship of the proletariat has turned into a dictatorship against the proletariat.

Lenin's policy toward the different nationalities of the Soviet Union has been similarly perverted by his successors. The subjugation of these nationalities started with the Greeks in 1937 and continued with the Germans and the West Ukrainians in 1939 and the Baltic States in 1940. As a result, in addition to the opposition of the peasants and industrial workers there has grown up a widespread nationally conscious opposition whose sole objective is to bring about the collapse of the present imperialist regime.

An even more powerful element in this internal opposition to the Soviet system is the existence of the forced-labor camps, which today contain about fifteen million prisoners. They are not only the most important single factor in the Soviet industrial machine; they also form a focusing point for opposition of all shades and opinions. In the discussions the prisoners hold among themselves it is possible to see a picture of the Russia of the future taking shape.

The situation today is similar to that in the summer of 1941, when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union. If he had made proper use of the existing social and nationalist discontent, it would have been an easy matter for him, in conjunction with a military offensive, to bring about the downfall of the Soviet system.

His liberation program should have read something like this:

1. National autonomy for the separate races of the Soviet Union.
2. Land for the peasants.
3. Factories for the workers.
4. Free democratic elections and the formation of a new government.

Of course such a policy was not to be expected from him. I remember very well a conversation I had with a Russian emigré when we were together in the Gestapo prison at Plötzensee in January, 1945. He had been a member of Vlassov's civilian staff and had been arrested by the Gestapo because of his sympathies for the Western Powers. He described the desperate attempts that had been made to get Hitler to abandon his "colonial policy" for Russia. He explained the program for the eventual downfall of the Soviet Union that had been

worked out and put forward to the so-called "Eastern Experts" in the German Foreign Office. As soon as the military attack came they paid no further attention to such advice.

When Hitler eventually realized the mistake he had made and consented to the formation of Vlassov's armies, it was, politically, too late.

I said to the Russian, "What are your plans for the future then?"

He could have made a long speech. But he didn't. He merely said, "We'll try again with the Americans."

The Americans, who gave a visible demonstration of their industrial might during the war, are the great hope of the peoples of Russia today.

The opposition is widespread, but any sort of coordinated organization of this opposition is impossible in an authoritarian state of these dimensions. As in Germany under Hitler, the leaders of the opposition groups have little contact with each other. But this is not their only handicap. Just as important is the fact that they get no support from abroad. It is clear that the West today has no real idea of what this opposition within the Soviet Union is like or of the chance it has of playing a decisive role in Soviet internal politics. And it should be remembered that the creation of the satellite states has increased the tension within the Soviet Union still further. For there, too, as in Russia, a small ruling class keeps the masses in subjection.

The Soviet's propaganda tactics are based on one simple basic principle: to make the most of every opportunity democratic societies present them with, whether as a result of their own internal contradictions or as a result of the incompetence of their statesmen. Since the end of the civil war the Soviets have always carried on their propaganda against the West on ground of their own choosing outside the Soviet Union. The first condition for the success of the West in the cold war is

to transfer the struggle from the ground of Western capitalism to that of the Soviet Union itself and there to attack the Soviets with its own weapons: subversive propaganda and, only in the last resort, force.

The hermetically sealed frontiers of the Soviet Union must be broken through by every means at the West's disposal. All the necessary conditions for an uprising such as that which took place in Eastern Germany on June 17, 1953, are present in the Soviet Union itself. It must be the West's aim to bring it about. In the Soviet Union, for a number of technical, geographical, and other reasons, this uprising would quickly develop into a civil war.

As soon as such a movement began to assume any proportions, the leaders of the Soviet Union would be so handicapped internally that they would never dare to risk military action against the West. For the immediate retaliation which this would entail would be their *coup de grâce*. They would need to put every ounce of energy they had into dealing with their internal situation. They would be quite incapable of thinking externally at all.

The military plans which the resistance groups in Vorkuta have developed for an eventuality such as this are, of course, limited geographically. Each camp thinks first in terms of its own precincts and the precincts of the neighboring camps. The farthest limit of any of their schemes is the Vorkuta area. Nevertheless such schemes are typical of every labor camp area in the Soviet Union. When prisoners arrive at Vorkuta from other areas—the forest camps of Ukhta and Inta, or from Karaganda, or the camps of the Far East—it always turns out that the military schemes of the prisoners in these camps are almost identical with those in Vorkuta. The thoughts, plans, wishes, hopes, and disappointments of all prisoners of the Soviet Union are the same. Fifteen million of them are ready to rise against the communism which holds them in slavery.

They are already beginning to realize their strength. The events that were to take place at Vorkuta within a few months of Stalin's death were to show them what they were capable of. It is up to the West to strengthen them in their growing self-confidence. And the first urgent necessity is to bring the system's vulnerability to the attention of public opinion all over the world.

In addition to identifying itself with the aims of the free resistance groups within the Soviet Union, the West must work out concrete plans for its cooperation with the prisoners. These should concentrate on the promotion of strikes and risings in the prison camps, which lie at the heart of the Soviet production of raw materials. No one needs to bother about the actual carrying out of the strike: this would be looked after by the resistance groups themselves. All the conditions for a strike are there—the camps all the way along the Arctic Ocean from Archangel to the Bering Straits are ready. The only thing needed is for the West to give the signal. The dropping of leaflets would be enough to set off a vast uprising.

Conversations with the military leaders of the resistance groups at Vorkuta give one a clear picture of their idea of the most desirable form of such cooperation between themselves and the West. This can be summarized as follows:

1. The dropping of leaflets over all camps, giving the signal to prisoners to call a general strike.

2. The dropping of arms, radio transmitters, explosives, medical supplies, and food. This is to be done not only at Vorkuta but in all the forest camps along the railway leading southward.

3. Immediate formation by the prisoners of partisan groups who would be in a position to cut the fifteen-hundred-mile railway line at given points.

4. Creation of an autonomous republic independent of Moscow, which would embrace the whole vast forest network of European and Asiatic Russia. If the prisoners had arms, this would be quite unassailable. Neither tanks, aircraft, nor artillery can operate effectively in this gigantic partisan terrain.

5. Intensive radio propaganda to the Soviet people from this independent republic with the aim of bringing about:

(*a*) A peasant rising under the traditional slogan, "Land for the Peasants."

(*b*) A workers' rising under the slogan, "Factories for the Workers!"

6. Proclamation of national autonomy for the Ukraine, the Baltic States, the peoples of the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East.

7. Ultimate creation of conditions similar to civil war by an aggravation of the tension between the hard core of the army and the peoples of the Soviet Union.

The next sensation of the remarkable year 1953 was the news that a batch of fifty-three prisoners was being released.

This batch was composed exclusively of foreigners: Germans, Poles, Hungarians, and Japanese. They were medically examined, and the state of their health was recorded at considerable length. They received a new set of clothes and, as they left the camp, were officially told that they were going home. At the same time the camp authorities announced that all foreigners would be going home in the course of the year.

This step brought Beria a lot of popularity, for he was the man in charge of all prison camps at the time and it could only have been taken on his initiative.

The Soviet citizens among the prisoners started saying, "If they're going to release you, things may improve for us. Perhaps there'll be a big amnesty for everyone before long."

A number of prisoners in the camp had known Beria personally. There was a good deal of discussion about what sort of man he was.

One of these people said, "He doesn't think ideologically in the way Malenkov and Molotov do. He's Stalin's Fouchet, and he'd willingly play Fouchet for the West as well."

This was the first amnesty of political prisoners that had ever taken place in the Soviet Union. Admittedly it was confined to prisoners who were innocent and who had sentences of fifteen years or less. But those who were being released were carrying with them the good wishes and the hopes of all those who had to stay behind.

After a time rumors began going round to the effect that the fifty-three had already reached home. Two months later, when no one any longer doubted this, a new prisoner from Moscow arrived in the camp. He had been in the *peresílka* in Moscow with one of these fifty-three, a German whose nationality had been queried at the last moment. The German had been brought to Moscow to have his case cleared up. And this was what he had told our informant:

"All the people who left Vorkuta at that time are now in an enormous transit camp at Tapiau near Königsberg. Their journey home was stopped at the time of Beria's arrest and has now been abandoned altogether. A commission has been set up to re-examine the prisoners' cases. From time to time odd prisoners are singled out and sent back East again."

This development was a direct result of the Beria affair. One of his first actions after Stalin's death had been to decree the release of all foreigners from prison camps in the Soviet Union. His fall prevented the amnesty from being carried out and with it, his whole plan, of which this was only a small part, for seeking a compromise with the West.

Although official news of the rising in Berlin and the Eastern Zone on June 17 only appeared late and in a garbled form in the camps, it wasn't difficult to form an objective picture of what had happened. The prisoners had learned to read

between the lines and to detect the undertones in a news bulletin. Thus even the ordinary prisoner felt instinctively that what had happened in Berlin and the Eastern Zone was a revolt against the police system that had arrested, sentenced, and enslaved himself.

The *Pravda*, which hung on the wall of the canteen, was besieged by huge crowds. Only those in front could read properly.

"Hi, old man!" someone called out from the back. "We can't stay here all day while you finish reading. We've got to go on the next shift. Read it aloud!"

And the old Ukrainian kulak slowly began reading out what the *Pravda* had to say.

The Soviet press admitted that the revolt had taken place but emphasized at the same time that it had collapsed. This "dirty piece of provocation on the part of Adenauer" had been successfully resisted. Peace and quiet had been restored. Presented in this form, the news was stimulating, though little more. The various scraps of news were eagerly discussed but there was no feeling as yet that the event carried immediate implications for ourselves.

It was the Central Committee of the SED's final report that made it quite clear to us that this had been no provocation of Adenauer's but a genuine strike movement on the part of the working class.

"The SED," read out the old Ukrainian slowly, "will in future turn its face toward the working class."

And someone called out from the back amidst a roar of laughter, "Well, what have they been turning so far? Their backsides?"

Five months after June 17 a group of fourteen Berliners arrived in camp 6, mainly students who had been politically active in the Western sector. Some of them had been arrested as late as April, 1953, and saw June 17 as prisoners of the

NKVD in the prisons at Karlshorst or Lichtenberg. They told us what a shock it had been for the Russians and what a complete state of desperation and confusion they had been thrown into.

"Troops in full war equipment suddenly arrived and occupied the prison. They stood at readiness day and night. We could hear shots in the distance. It was obvious from the attitude of the troops and the preparations they were making that they expected an attack on the prison. We were all herded together into a few cells, though there's a strict ruling against letting prisoners who are being interrogated see each other. The cells that had been evacuated by us were occupied by the people arrested on June 17. Later on we were put into the same cells with them, and stayed with them until we left. Some of them came to Vorkuta with us."

Unfortunately none of those who had taken part in the rising came into camp 6, but from what was passed on to us by those who had been in cells and railway trucks with them, it was possible to get an objective and detailed picture of what had happened.

I was present at an interview that took place between the intelligence officer of one of the Russian resistance groups and three of the students from Berlin, and it went something like this:

"What were the Berlin strikers' demands, then?"

"In the first place, cancellation of the new higher norms, and full payment of wages at the old norms. In addition to this, a lowering of the cost of living. Then, on the next day, the Russian-occupied zone came out with the following demands:

1. Free elections.
2. Release of political prisoners.
3. Disbanding of the German NKVD and of the People's Police.

4. Lowering of norms, taxes, and prices.
5. Abolition of the zonal frontier.
6. Resignation of the government and election of another government by an independent Parliament."

The Russian was delighted. "Excellent. All we have to add is autonomy for the separate nations of the Soviet Union. Otherwise we can take the program over intact. But what was the West's reaction? Did they think such a strike was possible?"

"No, they were completely taken by surprise."

"Did the West have any program for the event of Stalin's death?"

"How do you mean: a program?"

"I mean an all-around offensive program. A program for an out-and-out propagandist, diplomatic, and moral offensive, and, yes—in case all that should not prove enough, a military one too?"

"No."

"Why not?"

The students all answered at once: "No one's interested!"

"No one has any idea of what's going on in the Soviet Union?"

"No one in the West realizes the situation here."

"Did Eisenhower issue any statement about the events of June 17?"

"No."

"Not even later, when it was possible to see what had happened?"

"No."

"What did Churchill say?"

"Nothing."

"Did the Allies in West Berlin give any help to the rising?"

"No."

The Russian knew that the mayor of Berlin, Ernst Reuter,

of a story that Anatole France tells in one of his travel books. One day he went to a village in Normandy. "The day after tomorrow," he writes, "this village will be celebrating the feast of its patron saint. All the ducks will be slaughtered and devoured. But as they don't know that they are going to be devoured, there is nothing tragic about their situation. Tragedy consists only in knowing, and the art of living consists in knowing and forgetting again."

In this sense the situation of the "experts" is not tragic. They don't know that the Soviets are about to devour them. And those of them that do have long since forgotten.

Glossary of Russian Words

Bánya	Bathhouse.
Besprisórni	Vagrant, unemployed youths.
Bur	The cells.
Bushlát	Padded jacket.
Chórnoie Vorón	Literally: "Black Raven," i.e., a prison van or "Black Maria."
Davái	Come on! Go on!
Feldsher	A doctor who is only partly trained.
Kak família?	What's your name?
Kásha	Porridge.
Kómsomól	Young Communist League, a term used generally to denote the League or its members.
Machórka	Very strong tobacco made from the stem of the tobacco plant.
Mószhno	Literally: It is possible. All right.
Moujík	Russian peasant.
Peresílka	A transit camp; a camp in which prisoners are sorted out.
Platnói	Criminal.
Povérka	Roll call inside the barrack blocks.
Rasvód	Roll call outside the barrack blocks, held before going off to work.
Sangródok	A special camp for the sick.
Stolóvaya	Dining hall.

Sushílka	Drying room. The stoker's room.
Ubórnaya	Lavatory, latrine.
Úlitsa	Street.
Zaprétnaya zóna	The prohibited zone. The space between the warning rail and the barbed wire within which a guard will shoot on sight.