

REPORT ON THE RUSSIANS.....



W. L.
White

INSTALLMENT SIXTEEN

The Uzbeks, racially, are a mixture. They resemble the near-by Afghans, and others might have Persian or Arab blood. Occasionally we see a Mongolian face which has strayed down from Kazakhstan. Tashkent is an enormous sprawling city of cracked and peeling stucco with wide, hot, dusty streets. We arrive in the clean, comfortable office of the director of the Stalin Textile Trust and what with the heat are frantically thirsty. They start to open champagne but we plead for water. So they bring out bottles of that warmish, pink soda pop. Mercifully, there are on the table half a dozen fresh peaches. In half a minute the plate is empty and in another half minute it contains six peach stones. Nothing ever tasted so delicious and we realize how starved we have been for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Since we crossed the Ural mountains we have seen little American machinery—indeed, few foreign machines of any kind.

There are 14,000 workers in this textile plant and 80 per cent are women. The raw material is cotton, grown under irrigation in this valley. They also weave silk, which they import.



A typical Russian school building in its republics.

The workers' hours run from eight to ten daily according to their age, and they average more than 1,000 roubles per month, although some crack ones make as high as 4,500. In addition each worker averages between five and six meters of cloth per month as a premium.

The mayor of Tashkent is a dark little Uzbek, a friendly but rather timid Oriental. His name is Sadik Khusaynov. Before the war, he tells us, Tashkent had 700,000 people and more than 50 per cent were Uzbeks. At the peak of the evacuations, there were 900,000 but now it is back down to about 850,000.

Many machine-building industries were evacuated here with their workers—mostly the light and medium but a few heavy machine industries as well. They also make aircraft here.

A big, handsome, full-faced Russian with very blue eyes sits down by the mayor. He tells us they have here a plant making Douglas planes. Also a light machine tool plant converted to turn out arms and ammunition for the Red Army; shoe factories, garment industries, plus a plant for making emery stones needed by heavy industries.

The handsome young Russian is Rodion Glukhov, vice-premier of the Uzbekistan Republic. Now and then he interrupts—always picking up for the mayor if he falters.

Evacuees came with their plants, and will stay permanently. The plants came from Moscow, the Ukraine and the North Caucasus. And from Leningrad they have many skilled workers and engineers. He tells us Leningrad is anxious to have these engineers back. But Uzbekistan is anxious to keep such valuable men. It will be for Moscow to decide.

He tells us that Uzbekistan before the war had 6,200,000 people, so the addition of 2,000,000 refugees was a big task. But when we ask him how he managed it, he politely refers us to the mayor.

A huge munitions plant evacuated from Rostov-on-Don had left its foundry behind, which had taken two years to build. Here in Tashkent they finished one in twenty-eight days. A great aviation plant was moved from Moscow; within a month it was up to 80 per cent of its former production.

The dacha where we stay is comfortable and spacious. This rural mansion is a rest home and summer vacation place for members of the Uzbekistan cabinet.

Instead of Jim Crowing the weaker peoples, the Russians lean over backward to give them titles and offices which are rather beyond their capacities. At first, I jumped to the conclusion that the native officeholders were stooges, dressed up and provided with fancy offices but with little real power. But we learn that the premier of this republic is an Uzbek and a smart one—an old-time Bolshevik with a steel-trap mind, highly respected in the party councils. We are assured he is no stooge. He is apparently as powerful here in his own right as was Manuel Quezon in the Philippines.

Since I am so keen on ancient cities they offer a brief tour in the Oriental quarter of Tashkent. The old city is a labyrinth of winding alleys like those in the Arab Medinas in North Africa, the old quarter of Jerusalem, the Cairo bazaar, or the cities of Afghanistan across the border. But just outside this old city are two beautiful new white buildings, both ornamented with Uzbek designs—the post office and a huge cinema.

At first there seems nothing to see in the ancient city but adobe walls enclosing cobbled streets—with here and there a carved doorway. There are no windows in the walls.

A shabby old man offers to show us his house. With an ancient, six-inch iron key he unlocks a door under a pointed wooden arch, and we step out of the drab alley into a gem of a garden with a fountain in the center. At one end of this patio is his home—two clean, whitewashed rooms, some low furniture. On the floor is a mellow Oriental rug which he says was his grandfather's, and a polished brass samovar.

The old man tells me, as Nona interprets, that in writing any of this in America, I should understand that he is an old man, who well remembers the days when the emirs ruled this land. And that in those days he was not a man. But now he feels like a man, and is treated like a man, and for this he has to thank the Revolution and Comrade Stalin.

All Soviet streets are clean—even the crooked alleys of this Oriental town which elsewhere in the east would reek of garbage. But I must for the record tell Hal Denny's story of the eager professor.

Hal was New York Times correspondent in Moscow. One of his afflictions had been the numbers of eager tourists who came every summer to study the marvels of the Soviet system and become authorities on this Land of the Future.

A professor of municipal government in a mid-western college arrived to spend a month studying his specialty. After two weeks in the library he showed up at Hal's room, breaking in on a party of homesick correspondents, and began to talk about the marvels of the Soviet town-planning system.

All, all was marvelous, the eager professor insisted; their methods of police protection, taxation, utilities, elections, and administration! Yet on the rather important topic of sewage disposal there seemed to be no literature.

Could Hal tell him what they did with their garbage?

The answer, instantly given by a roomful of correspondents, rose in spontaneous chorus: "They eat it!"

Forty-year-old director, Afanasy Yarinin tells us this Tashkent plant builds Douglas airplanes. It arrived here from Moscow in November of 1941 with 7,000 workers, and thirty-five days later was in production. Now they have 14,000 workers building a Russian modification of the DC-3 and turn out six planes daily.

The Red Army has modified the Douglas so that it can be used as a combination transport, paratroop ship, hospital plane and night bomber.

Because it sometimes goes into battle, a huge transparent gun blister bulges from the top of its fuselage, creating a wind-drag cutting off at least 50 miles per hour. They use wood in the floor-braces, partitions and doors. The director insists it is as good or better than aluminum and easier to work.

Perhaps in Russia, where both aluminum and tools to work it are scarce. But aluminum is stronger and wood, under machine-gun fire, dissolves to flaming slivers.

Russia pays no royalties to Douglas, having paid a flat sum in 1939 which the director believes was \$2,500,000. Before that, his chief engineer, Boris Lisunov, worked in the Douglas Long Beach plant for two years, so they needed no American help when they set up production in Moscow. Only about 5 per cent of the machinery is American; the rest was made in the Soviet Union.

We are taken out into the desert to visit the Stalin-Chirchik Electro-Chemical Trust, which, when unscrambled, turns out to be a Soviet Muscle Shoals. They have dammed the Chirchik river, providing the 100,000 kilowatts of electric power necessary to run a huge nitrogen-fixation plant, which makes 80 tons of ammonia every twenty-four hours. Before the war it turned out 600,000 tons of fertilizer per year.

Without a minute's rest (because eating is the most gruelling part of our work) we are packed into cars and after a half hour's drive unload at a "fruit factory," an irrigated valley.

They walk us down an incredibly long arbor where grapes hang so low they knock our hats off. At its end we arrive at a pavilion where (Oh, Heaven! Be merciful before these well-meaning people kill us!) a long table is set for another banquet.

They tell us they are experimenting with cotton. This sovhoz (state farm) raises seed for all the kolhoz (collective farms) in the region.

This experimental station was started by an ancient Oriental with the jaw-breaking name of Rizamat Musamukhamedov. He is sixty-three and started working in the vineyards as a boy of thirteen. He is an Uzbek of a peasant family, a thin, dreamy man with an Uzbek skullcap (or tubeteyka) and a scraggly beard out of Arabian Nights. He has on his coat the ribbons of many state decorations.

The Russian director, Abram Maltezev. The big struggle since the war, he tells us, has been for sugar. Four refineries were evacuated from Ukraine to Uzbekistan, still others to Kazakhstan.

Since the Germans seized the sugar beet fields of the Ukraine, Uzbekistan has planted 35,000 hectares in beets for sugar, with this year another 15,000 hectares for seed for the liberated Ukraine.

Irrigation is responsible for the heavy yield of the seventy-five kinds of grapes grown here.

The average yield is 22 tons per hectare, with water supplied three to five times a season so the yield is steady. Samarkand is an even



The Republic of Uzbekistan furnished some of Russia's best fighters.

richer grape country. And, as here, the little hand-work done is on the grape collectives—most of it being done by tractor.

What we have seen of Soviet agriculture has been uniformly good. Since I come from a farming state I could not be badly fooled. True, they have shown us their best. But it is at least as good as our best.

We return to the dacha in time to change our shirts for the local opera. We see something called "Ulug-Beg" which was one of the titles of Tamerlane, and its story is of his times. Between acts we are taken into the banquet room (Yes, God help us, the usual table laid.) to meet the composer, a slender young Russian intellectual. His wife, a handsome but worn-looking girl, who has written the words—not in Russian, mind you, but in Uzbek—is here to explain the plot.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

ASK ME ? ANOTHER ?

A quiz with answers offering information on various subjects

The Questions

1. Of what country is the orange a native?
2. What occupation has the highest accident toll?
3. Where was George Washington inaugurated President the first time?
4. What does "apple pie" order signify?
5. How long will foreign G.I. brides have to wait to attain U. S. citizenship?
6. How many of the 360 islands of the Bermudas are inhabited?

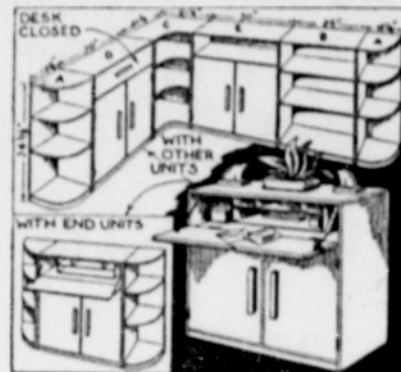
7. Not counting mythology, who was the first iron manufacturer named in literature?

The Answers

1. China. Cultivation began in the Middle ages.
2. Farming. It has three accidents for every two in industry.
3. Federal Hall, New York City.
4. Perfect, precise order.
5. They must complete two years' residence before filing a formal petition for citizenship.
6. Twenty islands.
7. Tubal Cain (Genesis 4:22).

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By Ruth Wyeth Spears



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Both Right

A teacher put a problem to his class: "There were 13 sheep in a pen and 7 jumped out; how many were left?"

One of the boys said, "None, sir," and when the teacher rebuked him for his deficient arithmetic and told him he knew nothing about figures, the boy's reply was, "Sir, you know nothing about sheep."

The Battle Front

Young John was meeting his grandfather for the first time.

"So you're my grandpa," he said, eyeing the old man over.

"Yes, my little lad," said the grandfather. "I'm your grandpa on your father's side."

"Oh, are you?" said John. "Then you can take it from me you're on the wrong side."

The class had had a lesson on Eskimos, and were asked to write an account of it. One bright youngster began: "The Eskimos are God's frozen people."

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