

# "LET US BE FRIENDS"

## VISIT BY SOVIET EDITORS TO THE UNITED STATES

*IF the atomic bomb is still World Shadow Number One, the relations of America and Britain with Russia are the biggest anxiety after the bomb. In many ways, too, one worry depends on the other. Any sign therefore that Russia wants to avoid a rupture is encouraging, so we reprint from the "Editor and Publisher" this condensed account of a recent meeting between American and Russian editors.*

THE 23rd annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington (April 18-20) welcomed three distinguished Russian editors as special guests, who were cheered by more than 300 members, the largest attendance in the Society's history, for their frankness and friendliness.

Although there was a wide variance of opinion between the Russian and U.S. editors on what constitutes a free press, the meeting was historic. No agreement was reached between the two groups on any subject—it was not intended there should be. The visiting editors stated, however, that they believed in the exchange of information and would welcome more U.S. correspondents in Russia. They said that visas were not their business, but that they would raise the question of this interchange of correspondents on a broader base as soon as they got back to Russia.

The three Russian guests, who each made brief statements to the Society and later subjected themselves to a question and answer period, were:

General Mikhail Romanovich Galaktionov, military editor of *Pravda*; Ilya Grigorevich Ehrenburg, editorial staff of *Izvestia*; and Konstantin Mikhailovich Simonov, editorial staff of *Red Star*.

Here are some extracts from their speeches and comments. They spoke through an interpreter and were introduced at two sessions by Wilbur Forrest, *New York Herald Tribune*, and Erwin Cunham, *Christian Science Monitor*, who conversed with them in French.

**General Mikhail Romanovich Galaktionov, military editor of *Pravda*:**

"Will you allow me to greet you in the name of my colleagues of the Soviet press. Our trip to this country was accompanied by certain difficulties and delays. My colleagues and I came more than 10,000 kilometres to get here, and for Mr. Ehrenburg and me, who came from Moscow, and for Mr. Simonov, who came all the way from Tokyo via Moscow, the trip was inevitably accompanied by extreme difficulties, but we overcame these difficulties in order to be here, first and foremost because we love and respect

the American people. Speaking in all sincerity, we tried hard to get here.

"The second reason why we tried hard to get here is that we also, like Mr. Wilbur Forrest, consider that the best way to move forward and to progress is to work together on both the consideration and the decision of all questions which concern the Russian people and the American people. Contact on every level and along every line, including the one which joins us in this room

during the war. This community of interest shown on the battlefield in blood, I should like to hope as a soldier, can be transferred into things which will concern us in time of peace.

"I should like to make only one comment on what was said earlier by Mr. Forrest by saying that in the Soviet Union there is and does exist freedom of the press. As editor of the newspaper *Pravda* I fulfil that function and edit it as I assume that Mr. Forrest fulfils that function and edits his paper in this country, but I believe that that is not inconsistent with the freedom of the press."

**Ilya Grigorevich Ehrenburg, editorial staff of *Izvestia*:**

"I want to say to you why I am here among you. This will be the best explanation of everything that may come later. I have been a writer, and I am still a writer, but once I wrote novels about love. I would like again to write novels about love, but life for many of us has forced us to write about other things and, instead of love, to cultivate hatred.

"I want to talk to you about Fascism, because Fascism is, unfortunately, not yet history. We cannot look upon it as something that belongs to the past. In the summer of 1936 I saw for the first time in my life how children's blood runs on the pavement of streets. That was in Madrid. My good and dear friends, there are among you fathers who will understand what it means to any man to see the blood of children on the pavement of big cities. Since I saw it, I have taken part in the struggle against Fascism in other places. That struggle still continues.

"I don't intend to tell you about the sacrifices and the efforts which my people have gone through in our struggle against Fascism. My country was in many areas destroyed. It is extremely difficult at home to find a family to-day around the table of which there is not an empty place. That is the price of our victory.

"I am sincerely glad as a man—and all humanity means to me what it does to you—that the terrors of war did not

(continued on next page)



ILYA EHRENBURG

"Life has forced us to cultivate hatred"

to-day, is the best method to achieve that progress.

"Most of all, I would like to express my satisfaction that the first word I heard in this meeting was from Mr. Forrest, whom I saw in Moscow when he visited the editorial offices of the newspaper *Pravda*, where I work, and where we made the first step toward the contact along newspaper lines from which we hope for much.

"It seems to me that in a consideration of these questions, we should start not with our differences, but with those things held in common by the Soviet Union and by the United States, and especially by the Russian people and the American people.

"This field of general agreement between us is best seen in the common action we carried on against Hitlerite Germany and against imperialist Japan. I think it was no accident that our peoples fought together against Fascism and against imperialism. It was due to the fact that, as peoples, we had the same feelings, we had the same thoughts, and we had the same general ambitions

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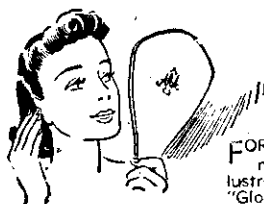
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