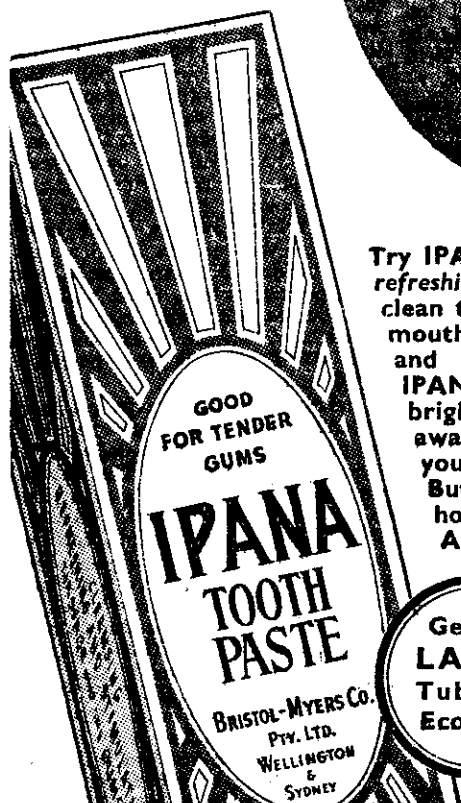


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"Quite a strong brass section this season"

## REPORT ON RUSSIA

(continued from previous page)

people which thinks that it is a nation." There is no question that millions of people in the U.S.S.R. think of themselves as a nation, and that millions of people in the U.S.A. think of themselves as a nation; and there is no question that the destinies of the two groups are kept distinct and regarded as separate, and to a large degree antithetical. But then there comes the assurance, from a visitor to Russia, that the Russians are "admirable." And the newspaper drops to our lap and we close our eyes, wondering whether there is not perhaps a hole somewhere, at the base of the wall, through which the admirable peoples could pass back and forth—the genuine, the hard-working, the very real people.

### What "Pravda" Said

"Pravda's" attack on Brooks Atkinson was reported by "Time" as follows:

PRAVDA's No. 1 hatchet man, David Zaslavsky, came out swinging savagely. He tried to pin on Atkinson the practice (Pravda's own practice, incidentally) of reckless and scurrilous fiction-mongering. He portrayed him as a "commercial traveller" for a typical capitalist newspaper enterprise, whose only job was to produce, by fabrication or distortion, the sort of news his bosses wanted to print.

Other Soviet-style billingsgate: "Foullest of words... ancient and hackneyed gossip... phantasmagoria of phrases... delirium of an impudent person... mercenary from head to heels... this savage... bandit... depraved souls... product of the Stock Exchange and black market... scum... How can you influence him? Such persons are not even beaten, so as not to stain one's hands."

### Dog of a Dog

And now, to get the picture complete, a line or two about the reaction of the reporter himself to the "Pravda" attack. Again we quote "The New Yorker": WE went over to the Times office to have a talk with Brooks Atkinson after Pravda recommended him for

the Order of the Highest Putrefaction, Fourth Class, and called him an untalented calumniator, a bandit not fit to be whipped, a liar, scum, a black-mailer, and so on. We discovered the bandit in a cubicle adjoining the "morgue." He is a lean, wiry, professorial, pipe-smoking type, and he was talking over the telephone to his mother. "Now, no need to get excited, Mother," he was saying, "I'm not excited. Mr. Sulzberger's not excited. They meant nothing personal. It's just the way those fellows carry on." Mr. Atkinson completed his call, lighted his pipe, and turned to us. "It did startle me slightly, though," he said. "To see all those terms and my name right in front of them. After all, I'm a quiet fellow—one-time English teacher at Dartmouth, dramatic critic, writer of books on birds and Thoreau and the White Mountains. But after ten months in Russia, I know those attacks are almost mechanical reactions to articles in the capitalist press. But 'untalented calumniator' is a new one. Sort of distinguished me, I think..."

Atkinson and his wife were in Moscow from last July until May of this year, living in a single room at the Hotel Metropole with a fine view of the outside of the Kremlin. Every morning, he polluted himself by listening to BBC news broadcasts, after which he read translations of Russian newspapers. During the early part of his stay, he devoted most of his afternoons to writing letters to the Government. "None of this casual telephoning for appointments," he said. "Everything must be in writing. But you never get any writing back. You can't say they've refused you, but they sure as hell haven't agreed to anything..."

Atkinson once met David Zaslavsky, the author of the Pravda attack, in the lobby of a Moscow concert hall. They were very polite to each other. "The word, I think, is ceremonious," Atkinson said. Zaslavsky is about sixty-five, Atkinson told us, and is a hack writer specialising in the vilification of foreigners (fourth class)....

Atkinson still considers himself a middle-of-the-road liberal and no Red-baiter. He liked the Russian people—what he saw of them—and he thought the Government was sincerely working for what it believed to be their welfare.