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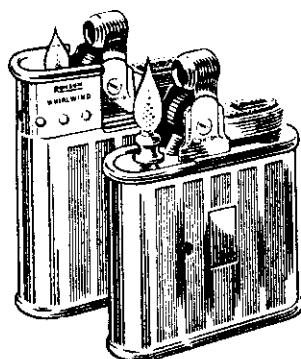
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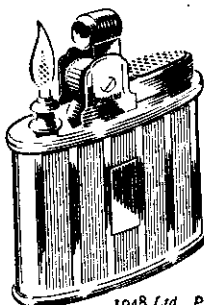
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# Roboleine

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## LOOKOUT

# Russia's Internal Troubles

THE Petrov affair has served two useful purposes. It has made everybody aware of the danger of this sort of Russian activity and it has made it more difficult for the Russians to carry on with this sort of activity. It has also revealed the fact—the quite encouraging fact—that the Russian Government is having a good deal of trouble. Vladimir Petrov's defection is only one of several, all in the same branch of the service, the secret police. When Stalin died, the head of the secret police, Beria, was one of the three men who succeeded him. That was a little more than a year ago. About ten months ago, Beria was dismissed from his job by his two colleagues, and about four months ago he was executed. Since his dismissal and his execution, no one in the Secret Police can have been feeling very safe. No doubt that's why those members of the service who are stationed abroad are showing such a strong disinclination to go home when their terms expire. Presumably they don't want to expire with their term.

There's plenty of evidence to support the report of James Reston, the chief Washington correspondent to the *New York Times*, that the Soviet Union is—to use his exact words—"having serious trouble within the ranks of its secret police." In fact, there's plenty of evidence to show that Russia is having trouble in every part of the Administration. That's where the real importance of these happenings comes in. They're a symptom of serious trouble in Russia. Radical changes have been made in important key posts in the Army. The same sort of thing has happened in the civilian Administration. Within a few months, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture has been overhauled three times. And in the Communist Party itself, men who have been members of the Party's Central Committee—that is, the high command of the Party—have been replaced. All these things have led Paul Wohl, of the staff of the *Christian Science Monitor*, one of America's leading specialists in Russian affairs, to report that, in his own words, "mounting internal pressures appear to have brought about a serious situation within the vast, enclosed world of the Soviet Union."

It's easier to understand what's going on now if we get some idea of what that "vast, enclosed world" is like. It holds about 190 million people of whom about six million are members of the Communist Party, and of whom a comparatively small number are members of what is almost certainly the most privileged class in the world. That's no exaggeration. The American Federation of Labour not long ago made a study of the distri-

Extracts from a recent commentary on the international news, broadcast from the Main National Stations of the NZBS

bution of incomes in Russia, and its economists discovered that the standard of living of the top income group in Russia is about a million roubles a year compared with the income of about 8000 roubles a year which the average worker gets—in other words, the top Communists live 125 times better than the average worker. It's rather interesting to make a rough comparison with New Zealand. The journeyman's average wage in this country is a bit over £11 a week. On that basis, if we operated on the same principle as Russia, Mr. Holland and his colleagues would be getting about £1700 a week—a bit more than £90,000 a year. And in Russia, there's no death duty, and income tax can't take any more than 3/- in the pound.

Long ago, Trotsky said that Stalin had organised not only a new political machine, but also a new caste. That's obviously true. In fact, Russia goes a long way towards fulfilling Bismarck's prophecy which he based on Marx's doctrines in Marx's lifetime: "There will be no question of lodging complaints against the wardens in the general Socialist prison. They will be the most merciless tyrants ever seen and the rest will be the slaves of these tyrants." Just as a matter of interest, a family alliance seems to have replaced a man in Russia. Two of the three men who lead these tyrants today—Malenkov and Khrushchev—are brothers-in-law. Khrushchev is married to Elena Malenkov, who was a singer at the Moscow Opera. Together, he and Malenkov hold the two most important posts in Russia—Malenkov as Prime Minister and Khrushchev as First Secretary of the Communist Party. It looks like a nice little family arrangement. It must sometimes leave Molotov a little uneasy because he isn't in the family, too.

But, like all arrangements of this sort, it has its problems. We're getting some idea of these problems today. The whole system is under intense strain and the beneficiaries of this tidy little family arrangement are finding it hard to keep order and discipline. I'd be inclined to



BERIA

He was not in the family

think that it will become harder as time goes on. In fact, I'm reminded of Stephen King-Hall's prophecy in March, 1948, when he said: "I believe that between now and 1950 some sort of upheaval, perhaps peaceful, will have taken place in Russia." In a bold prophecy of that sort a few years are neither here nor there. It looks like being partly fulfilled within reasonable reach of the date he fixed.

—R. M. HUTTON-POTTS, April 24, 1954.

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 14, 1954.