

# Soviet Dreads War Traveler Asserts

But Russia is More Communist Than 4 Years Ago, Says J. G. McDonald

"No Danger of Party Split"  
Russia in some respects is more communist than it was four years ago, and the Communists are "still masters in their own house," said James G. McDonald, of New York, chairman of the National Executive Board of the Foreign Policy Association, recently.

"The Communist Party is really a religious sect, danger of a split in which is being grossly exaggerated abroad," said Mr. McDonald. "I had thought the ruling classes in Russia talked only politics. I found them concerned much more about the rationalization and expansion of industry."

**The Most Promising Result**  
"The most promising result of the revolution in Russia is that which is rapidly melting and almost never repeated—the rebirth of individualism. The foreign policy of the Soviet Government is dominated by the desire to maintain peace. The Soviet authorities know that nothing would so effectively wreck their program of industrialization, on which they pin their dearest hopes, as would an international war. It is because they are convinced that such a war is inevitable that they are determined to precipitate just such a conflict."

"But the endeavors of the Russian Government to convince the world of its peaceful intentions are hampered frequently by the activities of the Russian Communist Party and its various international, neither of which the Government has power to control. The Third International has not given up its program of world revolution. The Russian Communist Party has not and will not disavow its support of that program."

Despite Trotsky's recent expulsion from the Communist Party, said Mr. McDonald, there is "no real danger of any serious split—the party is stronger than any leader or group of leaders, and its cohesive force is so great that no serious set of men who seriously threatened the unity of the organization."

**Masses Not Influenced**  
"The Terror is very real," Mr. McDonald continued, "yet its depressing effect on the life of Russia easily can be exaggerated. It influences little or not at all the great mass of the people—the peasants. It does not noticeably depress the workers. The only classes upon which it bears down with its full appalling weight are those of the old regime, most of whom are like you in this room."

"The most depressing phenomenon in Russia is not the terror—it is the yawning chasm between the old and the young. The prevailing viewpoint of many of these young is: 'The old are hopeless, they cannot be taught, only the young are willing to break with the past.' Hence the emphasis in the schools, in popular demonstrations and in countrywide propaganda on the theories and ideas which challenge the young, make them feel their parents are linked to an obscurantist and superstitious past."

Mr. McDonald expressed doubt whether political recognition of Russia and granting of substantial credits to Russian industry would result in any moderating of the radicalism of Bolshevism.

## Chamberlin in Physical Test Told He Can't Judge Distance

Clarence Chamberlin, transatlantic pilot, almost failed in his physical examination for a pilot's licence recently. He was examined by Dr. Conrad Berens of 30 East Fortieth Street, examiner for the Department of Commerce, which issues licenses for interstate flying. He gave Chamberlin a rating of 25 bad points. Thirty points would have disqualified him. One point against the veteran pilot, noted for his control of airplanes and his landings, was that he had no judgment of distance. This amused Chamberlin and his friends. A card with a single line on it was handed to him and he was told to hold it at arm's length and draw it toward his eyes until he could see two lines. Doing this twenty times a day will correct his faulty estimate of distance, he was told.



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## A CURE FOR GOSSIP IS NOT YET FOUND

German Proposal to Exile Tale-Bearers Is Not Satisfactory to Psychologists—The Inferiority Complex as the Root of the Evil

It is written that in the days when Mistress Anneke Jans trod the sidewalks of old New Amsterdam one Grietje Van Saleen—for reasons known only to herself—spread the report that in crossing the street on a muddy day Mistress Anneke had a way of lifting her skirts in "an unseemly and extreme fashion." In court the charges were "proved to be false," though by just what process of law is not made plain. Anneke Jans's name was duly cleared, and Mistress Grietje Van Saleen went forth disgraced as "the worst woman in New Netherland." But whether or not the gossip she set going thereafter ceased is a point which the historians overlook.

That perennial thorn in the flesh of all small communities, the town gossip, has been dealt with in various ways in all ages, but it has remained for the present Republic of Germany to place him (or her) in the criminal class. Among the reforms that the Reichstag Judiciary Committee has prepared for submission this Winter is one that would make gossiping an offense punishable, in extreme cases, by banishment from the community. The tale-bearing German woman who hereafter cannot hold her tongue runs the risk of being preemptively invited to leave town. One of the framers of the new German code, Judge Schaffner, is quoted as saying that just as there are prisons for criminals and asylums for the insane, so there should be institutions or colonies to which solely tried communists could commit their offending gossips.

**Hard to Stop Gossip.**  
Though the efficacy of this treatment has yet to be tested, the plan finds few supporters on this side of the water, least of all among the psychologists. It would appear that those who make a study of human frailties are by no means convinced that you can stop gossiping, in Germany or anywhere else, by threatening the offender with prison. Indeed, a real onanly strong case might even be made out in favor of not stopping gossip at all. There are communities

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the same whether we hold a lynching party or sit in at a ladies' sewing circle. In either case we are satisfying a desire to inflict suffering.

"Of course, there are other gratifications in gossip. Most of us like to be the first to tell a bit of news. The gossip enjoys that feeling. But more, especially he enjoys the sense of tearing down some one else. If he can lower the standing of some one more important than himself he thus tends to elevate his own relative importance. So-and-so is no better than he is."

"That 'No man is a hero to his valet' is very true, but little understood psychologically. It is not because the valet is a valet. In other words, the valet projects his own failings into his master and thus persuades himself that he is as good a man as his master."

"The same thing that accounts for the popularity of gossip may also explain the popularity of the so-called new biography, namely, the sense of enjoyment that comes to the inferior in tearing down and belittling the great one. I do not suggest that the modern biographer is insincere in his attempts to present a true picture of his subject, but the many who read these new lives of great men must find there the same sort of gratification that comes to the gossip. In pondering the frailties of the great they feel that their own status in the community is raised."

**How Gossip Evolves.**  
Gossip, as the psychologists view it, is somewhat short of a simple matter for the law to handle. At Teachers College, for instance, in a favorite experiment tried on the children in a history class, the teacher will take one pupil aside and tell him a simple story of some historical import. The child will then be invited to tell the story to his nearest classmate, who in turn repeats it to his neighbor. The story thus goes the round of the class. Its resemblance to the original, of course, is extremely remote.

A good deal of gossip, the psychologists believe, thus evolves. Its origin is often doubtful. It is assumed that all gossip is harmful; there seems to be no evidence that people indulge in any other kind. But this oftentimes may be due to the natural human tendency to make a good story better. Professor Robert S. Woodworth, head of the department of psychology at Columbia University, lays considerable emphasis on this point. He has observed a small town "dress up" a mere rumor until it began to be passed along as an amazing fact. All of which comes under the heading of gossip, and often very harmful gossip, yet it cannot exactly be labeled a crime and laid at the door of a single individual.

**Practice Among Women.**  
As to why—as is commonly held—women are more prone to gossip than men, there may be more than one answer. But it is Professor Woodworth's observation that women more often than men do offend in this way.

**In Montenegro**  
In the older parts of Montenegro the head of the family and his shepherd boy still follow the quaint old custom of lighting the animals to their stalls on Christmas Eve. Each takes a lighted wax candle and they go together into every stall in turn, holding the candles for a moment in each of its corners. Then, at the stable door they take stand, one at each side of it, and hold their candles high while the little shepherdess drives the animals in. One by one, sheep, goats, and oxen, they pass between the flickering lights. After that the shepherd boy and the little shepherdess kiss each other "that the cattle may live in peace and love," they say.—From "The Children's Book of Christmas."

"Weren't you surprised, uncle, to hear that poor Harry had left me a widow?" "That's about all I expected he would leave you."

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## Tracing the Origin of Old Songs

Both fascinating and peculiarly difficult it is to trace old tunes to their source. Start out on such a trail and it will lead often to baffling mazes. "Yankee Doodle," for instance, takes one to a Dutch harvest song—though some authorities insist that the tune is of English origin. "The Star-Spangled Banner" reproduces the air of an old English drinking song, "To Anacreon in Heaven." Trace "Home, Sweet Home" to its source and it will be found that it was a folk melody taken down long ago from the lips of an Italian.

What is the oldest tune in the world? Many assert that it is "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," and tell us that it was brought back to Europe by the Crusaders when they returned from the East. Advocates say also that it came to Egypt by way of Babylon. Critical camps are divided on this theory, however, opponents dismissing it as nonsense.

A great many students of the subject believe that the oldest tunes in the world are those sung by children at their games. Even the most ancient of civilized peoples, it is said, heard on their streets airs similar to "London Bridge is Falling Down" and "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush."

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## Earthworms Detect Light And Colors, Says Scientist

Though unable to see, earthworms can still detect light, and can distinguish between colors. They do not seem to mind red light particularly, but a streak of blue light is like a streak of fire to them.

In Science, Professor G. H. Brentnall of Baker University describes a test which he made on the color-sensitivity of worms: "For the experiment I used a box about two and a half feet long, two feet and eleven inches high. This I thoroughly blackened inside. For light I used gas with a mantle and a reflector. The light was passed through a carbon disulphide prism and fell on the box. Into this array of spectral colors I dropped an- glemworms. As they moved to get away from the light they always went out the red end. They would pull back from the blue as if it hurt them and turn toward the red."

Two friends met in the street one day. "I hear you've broken off your engagement to Miss Jones," said one to the other, "did she take it much to heart?" "No," replied his friend, sadly. "She's taking it to court instead."

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