From 1939 to 1943 the United States went from a period of total opposition to the Soviets to a gradual acceptance of its new ally. The "New York Times" editorial page shared in this trend: moving cautiously from complete rejection of the Soviets to acceptance of the Russian people, next the Red Army, and finally the Soviet government. The "Times" was probably no more naive, no more idealistic, and no more expedient than any other leading newspaper in this country. Yet it provides a sample case study of the build-up of United States-Soviet cordiality. Post-war reaction against the Soviet Union would have been less intense if it had been based upon a more realistic foundation. An artificial Soviet Union had been created—a Soviet Union which was capitalistic, nationalistic, and religious. When the war ended and the Soviet policy was redirected, many realized that Stalin's ideas were no more amenable to western democracy than were Lenin's ideas. The judgments of the "Times," first in its attacks and later in its acceptance of the Soviet Union, were only a reflection of the judgments of the people of the United States in international affairs. (BZ)
FRIENDS TO THE END: "THE NEW YORK TIMES" AND THE SOVIET UNION, 1943-1945

BY

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From 1939 to 1943 the United States went from a period of total revulsion against all things Russian to a gradual acceptance of its new Soviet ally. Of course the editorial page of the New York Times shared in this trend. Despite its reputation for internationalism and its unwavering support for England and France, however, the nation's leading journal was slow to embrace the Soviet Union. From June 1940, when Hitler's drive to the East had thrust Russia into the Allied camp, until December 1941, when the United States was forced by Pearl Harbor finally to commit itself formally to the Allies, the Times had cautiously moved from complete rejection of the Soviets to acceptance of the Russian people, next the Red Army, and finally the Stalinist regime. But once the Times had embraced the Russian bear, it found it exceedingly difficult to let go.

Despite frequent Russo-American crises which threatened the coalition, especially in 1945, the Times remained as confident at the end of World War II as it had been in 1943 that Russo-American accord learned in time of war would likewise be the pattern for peace. Suspicions during the tumultuous San Francisco Conference in the Spring of 1945, which were repeated throughout the closing phases of the war, were not echoed in the editorials of the New York Times. On the contrary, Times editorialists were actually more confident of post-war Russo-American cooperation in August and September of 1945 than they had been at the beginning of the year. They could maintain such sweeping confidence during this period (an epilogue to the hot war and prologue to the cold war) because of some timely Russian concessions and extensive idealization of these concessions by the newspaper itself—accompanied by occasional rationalization when the
concessions were insufficient.

One rationalization frequently expressed in Times editorials was the contention that a quarrelsome attitude among those suffering from the German pestilence only reflected that the patients were getting well. The pattern of Russo-American contacts in the last three years of the war does indicate that the metaphor was apt. While the Nazi ravages were most severe, the danger of serious disputes between Russia and her western allies was remote. Sharp Soviet demands for a western front to absorb some of the pressure of Nazi arms prompted the greatest controversy during the German offensive; but there was no real conflict, for the only issue was when the second front should come, not if it should come. It was when the Allies had seized the offensive from Hitler that the Anglo-Russian and Russo-American alliances faced their severest tests. While Hitler rampaged unchecked across the European continent, the only goal possible was the defeat of Nazi Germany. Only when this primary goal was finally in sight were there serious disputes over secondary war aims.

Realization that Stalin was as determined to control Eastern Europe as he had been during his cooperative era with Germany was a sobering thought for most Americans. And the renewal of Communist agitation on all international fronts was a further disappointment. The New York Times' ability to survey such developments and still remain a firm believer in America's "Russian ally" seems primarily a tribute to sheer will power. When finally convinced that the Russians could be relied upon to continue the fight against Hitler, the newspaper would permit nothing to come between the Big Three nations. And nothing did—it would seem from reading Times editorials of 1944 and 1945. The newspaper was aware of the "incidents" which tended to estrange Russia from her military partners; yet it was so insistent upon collaboration among Russia, Great Britain, and the United States that it belittled many of the most striking lapses in friendly cooperation. The editorial pages of 1945 spoke of Russian cooperation and good will while the front pages cried "Disruption in U.N.," "Red Threat in Eastern
Europe," etc.

Optimism was justified in discussions of the most persistent controversy of the war, the second front demands which began in 1941 and continued until D-Day (June 6, 1944). There was no need to rationalize bitter Soviet denunciations of British and American delay in launching an attack on the French coast, because, after 1941, the Times had usually sided with the Russians by pointing out the urgent need for an Anglo-American assault against the mainland. Any rationalizations about the second front were intended to account for the failure of America and Britain to begin a new front, rather than to explain away the Russian demands for a western front.

More serious grounds for conflict with Russia developed in the waning months of World War II. Most significant were the renewed activities of Communist organizations throughout the world and the Russians' war aims, particularly their ideas on the boundaries and destinies of Eastern Europe.

During his partnership with Hitler, Stalin demonstrated that his goal was to mold Eastern Europe into a Russian sphere of influence, and when the Germans were driven from Russian territory he was finally able to carry out that goal. First he regained nearly all the territory that had once belonged to Imperial Russia, Finland being the only corner of Tsarist Russia which was not grasped to the bosom of "Mother Russia." On March 15, 1943, the Times first took editorial notice of the threatening attitude of the Russians with regard to their international frontiers. The Soviet assertion that Russia alone was fighting Hitler and thus was entitled to a unilateral solution to the problems of Eastern Europe was sharply denied by Times editorialists.

The failure of the Russians to release their hold on the Baltic states, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, was cause for further disillusionment, but at least this aspect of Russian expansion was brought about by the "voluntary" enlistment of the Baltic governments--even if they were captive governments--into the Union
of Soviet Socialist Republics. Furthermore, the Baltic states had no government in exile to disclaim the Russian assertions that they were voluntary additions to the Soviet Union. Thus the anger over these Russian *faits accomplis* was quick to wane.

But the anger resulting from the dispute over the Russo-Polish frontier was a different matter. After all, it had been the German rape of Poland which had finally brought England and France into World War II, and the spectre of Hitler's wartime victim being victimized by Stalin in the peace settlement was difficult to accept. Both Russia and Poland made claims upon the huge slice of the Ukraine which the Poles had extorted from a prostrate Russia after the First World War. In April 1943 the Russians severed diplomatic relations with Poland, loudly proclaiming that Poland was in league with Nazi Germany, to which the *Times* retorted that "the absurd charge" serves only "to remind other small nations of the 'partnership' which divided Poland in the first place." Quick to recognize this Soviet move as a threat to Polish borders, the New York *Times* remarked, only a week after the diplomatic break, that the feigned Russian resentment... does not disguise the fact that the real issue between these two countries is their quarrel over frontiers.

Before the editorialists could follow-up the scent of Soviet intentions in Poland, Premier Joseph Stalin wisely put them off the track. In a letter addressed to the New York *Times*, he claimed that his ambition was for Poland to be a free and strong neighbor. In the editorial response, the *Times* commented that while the Red premier made no mention of the border question, it had been "an error of statesmanship" to mention it in the first place. The newspaper gladly concluded that

*We are entering a new epoch and a new dimension in international relations... The chief significance of the Soviet leader's terse message to America is as a sign that Russia, like ourselves, perhaps even more unwillingly, is moving with the inexorable tides of history.*
From then on, the New York Times interpreted Russian claim-jumping as an innocent desire to secure the Soviet Union from further invasions from the west. "Security" became the key word in succeeding editorials on the war aims of America's Eurasian ally. But there was not yet a complete acceptance of Soviet arguments. Accompanying the statement that the Russian goal was security, not aggression, would usually come the advice that the Russians should reject a unilateral settlement and allow the United Nations to arbitrate the dispute. This would "lift the already great prestige of Russia in this country to a new high plane of confidence and understanding." 

As early as January 1944, the Times remarked that the former Russian-Polish frontiers were not necessarily the best ones for the future.

The final settlement obviously cannot turn on the treatment of any historic boundary as sacred. The land and people of eastern Poland merge almost imperceptibly into those of Russia. There is room for adjustment; room, above all, for new conceptions of frontiers. 

In May, this argument was reinforced with the reminder that without Russia victory over Germany would be impossible.

... the [Polish-American] Congress will have to bear in mind that there can be no victory without Russia and no Free Poland without victory; and it will also have to recognize that Poland in its pre-war boundaries contained large minorities to which it had had no claim under the Atlantic Charter. 

... Neither are the American people committed to restore all pre-war boundaries intact.

Throughout the Polish border crisis, the New York Times was determined that it must not threaten the military cooperation of Britain, Russia, and the United States. The first editorial on the subject called it an unfortunate occurrence which could not affect the outcome of the war, "for the United Nations are united by something that transcends all and any possible differences between them or their governments." 

The following year, even the Soviet breaking of international agreements by establishing the Lublin government in Poland without notifying their allies was accompanied by the admonition that
"bad as the situation is, it cannot be permitted to come between Russia and the western Allies or to affect their prospects of victory." And even when this victory was finally in sight, in April 1945, the Polish problem remained a "wholly incidental" issue which must not interfere with the formation of an effective United Nations Organization.

Nazi propagandists devoted special efforts to the encouragement of a split between Russia and her Anglo-American allies, and with the Russo-Polish dispute the propagandists found the area where their seeds of dissension could be put to the best—or worst—use. But the Nazis' own earlier conduct in conquered Russia and Poland was the most effective insurance against the success of the German efforts to separate Russia from her western allies. The memory of Nazi atrocities was, for the New York Times, another good reason for continued friendship with Russia. An editorial advised that Americans remember that Russia has suffered horribly from a Nazi invasion she did not provoke; that she made a magnificent recovery after initial setbacks; and that final victory over the Nazis might not otherwise have been possible. As a military ally Russia has rendered the western world a service beyond price.

The discovery of the horrid conditions at the Maidanek prison camp in Poland was an even more persuasive argument against a split with Russia. The New York Times called the newspaper accounts of this Nazi prison "horrifying information" which has made the Russian-Polish disputes seem insignificant.

No settlement of the Polish question can be considered wrong if it unites Europe in the determination that those who committed this inconceivable crime shall be punished and that never again shall any Power arise in Europe capable of such crimes. Boundaries and compositions of Governments are of secondary importance. It is civilization itself that is at stake.

From the very first the New York Times had contended that the dispute between Poland and the Soviet Union "can not and will not" interfere with the cooperation of Russia, England, and America, so of course the editorialists were delighted by the apparent vindication of their opinion when a settlement
was finally reached. But this stirring example of Big Three unanimity was gained at the expense of little Poland. When it came to "compromising" on the re-establishment of the frontier between Russia and Poland, the Poles did all the compromising while the smiling Stalin graciously absorbed all of the disputed land. And though the Russians did compromise to the extent of allowing portions of the so-called "reactionary" Polish government in exile to be assimilated with the Russian-sponsored Lublin government, the representatives from the exile government were not permitted to make any significant changes. The Soviet Union could well afford to be "cooperative" so long as it required no sacrifices. Nevertheless, Times editorials stated that, by finally agreeing to the long-delayed reorganization of the Polish government, the Soviet leaders "have proved they are just as eager to get along with us as we are to get along with them." These glad tidings heralded an era of improved Russo-Anglo-American cooperation, in the opinion of the Times, for it considered the Polish problem to be "as difficult as any that can confront us in Europe."

The prediction that there would be no more difficult dilemma than the Polish question was correct. Yet, even with this dispute settled, the long-awaited era of peaceful cooperation among the major world powers did not occur. Why? Because an accumulation of forceful Russian actions and attitudes--none of them as critical as the arbitrary creation of a Lublin government in conflict with the Polish government-in-exile at London--increased American suspicions of their wartime ally. Apparent Russian efforts to mold all of Eastern Europe into a Russian sphere of influence brought particularly loud reactions. The roots of such conflicts certainly extended far back into the war years. But the wartime New York Times, in its desire for friendly contact with the Soviet Union, had overlooked them when they showed above ground. The increase in Soviet influence in the Balkans, for instance, was attributed to British in-
emptiness rather than to sinister motives on the part of the Russians. British vacillation "created a political vacuum which almost compelled the Soviet Government to step in."¹⁸ As late as the end of 1944, the Times rejected the claim that the Russian military drive in the Balkans was prompted by political rather than military considerations.¹⁹ The newspaper's unflagging trust in the Soviet regime was expressed shortly before the San Francisco Conference, when the Times dissociated itself from "that small group of Americans which seems only too eager to pick a quarrel with Russia over Poland." Admitting that the main question was whether or not Russia would live up to her Yalta agreement about Eastern Europe, the Times concluded: "We shall continue to believe that it will be [carried out], until a final decision on Russia's part forces us reluctantly to a different conclusion."²⁰

The disputes raging at the San Francisco Conference might have clouded this sunny view, but Times editorials often ignored the clouds because of a preference for rays of hope. Aside from the continuing conflict over which Polish government to seat at the conference, the greatest dispute concerned voting methods. This conflict had been foreseen more than a year before by the Times. When the Soviet Union reorganized itself into sixteen individual--though not independent--republics, the Times warned of conflicts if the U.S.S.R. should demand a United Nations vote for each of its sixteen parts.²¹ The newspaper was so confident that both Britain and the United States would flatly refuse such a demand, that its disappointment was heightened when President Roosevelt finally acquiesced in Soviet appeals for a triple vote in the United Nations. The Times was as opposed to individual votes for White Russia and The Ukraine as it had previously been to votes for the less developed republics. Even though the Times had been suspicious, in February 1944, of Russian ambitions for more than one vote, the strongest editorial scolding was directed toward the U.S. when open agitation for those votes began fourteen months later. The Soviet drive for three
votes seemed sinister "simply because of the secrecy" encouraged by American officials. The newspaper was especially impatient with President Roosevelt's three-way blunder on the three-vote issue. It complained that F.D.R. erred first in agreeing to support Russian claims for three votes, second in his counter-claim (later abandoned) for three votes for the U.S., and third in his failure to publicize his agreement with Premier Stalin.

The multi-vote issue became steadily less significant to the Times, as the San Francisco Conference drew nearer. Stalin's decision to dispatch Foreign Secretary Molotoff as the Russian delegate is partly responsible. Previously Stalin had indicated that Russia would be represented by Soviet Ambassador Konstantin Omansky, but President Truman urged that the Soviet Union send a more highly-ranked statesman. Thus Molotoff's nomination was regarded by the Times as a "gesture deliberately made for the purpose of pleasing the new President of the United States and demonstrating Russia's desire for close and confident collaboration." Because the Times was so delighted to welcome Molotoff it may have hesitated to berate the demands which he brought with him. Now the journal was quite confident that the Soviet request for three votes could not threaten the founding of the United Nations. An editorial stated that

In our own judgment this claim needlessly complicates the already complex business of the conference, but we see no reason to believe that it raises an issue so fundamental or so crucial as to jeopardize the success of the work which the conference has undertaken.

... it would make no real difference in the operation of the new league whether Russia had three votes, or three times three, in the assembly. ...

... there is nothing here that is basic enough or troublesome enough to wreck, or even to halt, the work of the conference.

Then on May 1 the Times observed, partially in jest, that the seeming differences between Molotoff and other United Nations delegates might result from Soviet efforts to publicize their best talking-points. The Russian demands for three U.N. votes, for instance, might be merely an effort to demonstrate the
effectiveness of its nationalities policy. ("To emphasize the self-determined position of Ukraine and White Russia is good publicity for the Soviet Union in general.") And Molotoff's obdurate rejection of U.S. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius as permanent chairman of the conference, in favor of a four-man leadership, might be merely a demonstration of the Russian system of government-by-committee. ("If Mr. Molotoff wants to put in a 'plug' at San Francisco for this peculiar Soviet institution of Government by committee or presidium, he is only human.") For the remainder of the conference, New York Times editorials accentuated the positive by stressing visible cooperation among Britain, Russia, and America. They took due note of disappointing lapses in collaboration but still left the overall impression that Big Three cooperation far surpassed dissension.

The one subject upon which the Times was never optimistic, even in the bloom of Russian-American friendship, was the activity of Communists outside of the Soviet Union. Early in the war it was decided that cooperation with Russian Communists was both advantageous and necessary; but the Times never changed its attitude toward the international Communists, particularly Americans. Time and again it preached that the American Communist Party was "the chief obstacle to complete Russo-American understanding." The response of Times editorials to the agitation of American Communists frequently demonstrated the truth of this warning. The Communist Party was the one group which could detour the Times' journey from an anti-Soviet to a pro-Soviet attitude; for example, just as the newspaper's editorial policy had begun to stress the need for a second front, the U.S. Reds began clamoring for it, thus making the Times less confident of its own position.

American Marxists retained this fatal charm throughout the war. When Red-head Earl Browder complained in February 1943 of the inadequacy of American efforts on the European front, the Times recalled that the United States was preparing for war with Germany while Stalin was still an ally of Hitler.
This was one of the few times that the unpleasant memory of the Russo-German Treaty was invoked. A month later, the vocal gyrations of the American Marxists were blamed for Russian aloofness toward international conferences, and thus for the threat of waning American interest in world cooperation; it was contended that the Soviet Union would be more willing to cooperate if it were not for this American minority which could always be relied upon to support Soviet policies.\(^{30}\) American Communists' support for Marshal Tito's Partisan forces in Yugoslavia only increased the Times' "prevailing doubts."\(^{31}\)

At the end of the war, the Times was so strongly opposed to the American followers of the Communist party line that its opinion of Tammany Hall (which already seemed at rock-bottom) was actually lowered when the New York Democratic machine fished for Communist votes. When Tammany was forced by its mayoralty candidate, William O'Dwyer, to withdraw its support for a Harlem Communist who was standing for reelection to the city council, the Times said that

> Tammany . . . threw overboard entirely whatever party principles it has by endorsing a Communist in the hope of picking up some votes in Harlem. Better counsel . . . has now prevailed. The New York County Democrats may lose some votes. If they wish anyone to respect them as democrats with a small d, they are better off without them.\(^{32}\)

The dichotomy between Soviet and American Communists was rationalized when Stalin dissolved the Third International, apparently disowning Earl Browder, William Z. Foster, and their disciples. Times editorials wisely assumed that the American Communists were not really abandoning the party line, but Stalin's intentions were presumed legitimate.

> Despite continued skepticism about its effects, which must still be demonstrated by events, the dissolution of the Third or Communist International is none the less one of the most momentous developments of the war. . . . \(^{42}\)

Stalin . . . it is much more real and genuine than to the ideological puppets who signed it.\(^{23}\)

On July 3, 1943, a month and a half after the Comintern was buried, an editorial
argued that the American Communist Party "does not represent Russian policy, if ever it did." And by the following March, American Communists were not even regarded as "authentic Reds."

It was not Russian communism that received greatest praise from Times editorials in the last three years of the war. The editorialists divined strong currents of nationalism and capitalism beneath the supposed facade of communism, and these two undercurrents were the basis of hopes for continued cooperation with the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union's famous journalist-propagandist, Ilya Ehrenburg, got the year 1943 off to a promising start by thrusting barbs into the tender hides of "mankind lovers" who are "egoistically indifferent to their own mothers and children." The Times was convinced that Ehrenburg was saying that the Russians were fighting for their homeland, not for any Communist ideology. Later that same month the newspaper noted with pleasure that the Bolshevik revolution had been "nationalized"—that "the Soviet Union is considered to have abandoned the aims of universal revolution which dominated the first years of its existence." The apparent abandonment of Russian plans for a world revolution certainly facilitated the acceptance of the Soviet Union by the Times, because of its steadfast opposition to international communism. Russian nationalism, or even nationalized communism, was a better bed-fellow for American capitalism than the international communism of the Communist International. "Anybody in his right mind," it said, "will gladly welcome her into the family of nations as long as she confines her Bolshevist system to her own borders."

Though this editorial doubted that the Marxian goal of world revolution was really forgotten, such reserve was worn away in time. By the summer of 1943 the Times agreed that Russia will want to feel secure and she won't worry about 'bolshevising' anybody. She has more than enough on her hands to rebuild and develop her own country.

Then, at the end of 1943, when the Internationale was cast aside as an unsuitable
national anthem for the Soviet Union, the Times was happy to acclaim America's patriotic, nationalistic, religious, and conservative ally:

But there is more than propaganda in the Russian explanation that 'the "Internationale" does not reflect the basic changes that have taken place in our country as a result of the victories of the Soviet system and does not express the socialist content of the Soviet state.' ... Russia has become patriotic, nationalistic, even religious. Above all, it has acquired through its victories a new sense of security and achievement. In short, it has finished its revolution. It has established for itself a new place in the family of nations. And like all successful revolutionaries, its leaders are becoming conservative and, opposed to any further revolution which might turn against them.

With such a Russia, we and all nations can cooperate in mutual confidence that the internal structure of the nations is no bar to their collaboration in international affairs.

In the remaining war months, New York Times editorials continually expressed delight over demonstrations of Russian nationalism. The climax was reached May 27, 1945, when "the new vigorous patriotism for the Soviet Fatherland" was suggested as a fitting model for the preaching of American patriotism. However harmful the extremes to which nationalism had led the world in decades past, Russian nationalism was much less fearsome to the New York Times than international communism.

Promoting even greater optimism was the discovery of an apparent recovery of capitalism within the Soviet Union. The dissolution of the Communist International had been interpreted as a great step for Russian nationalism, but also as a decisive factor in the growth of capitalism in Russia. Only six weeks after the Russians had publicly severed their connections with the worldwide Communist movement for the duration of the war--an editorial on the variation of wages in Russia concluded that communism was dying there. Unmindful of previous occasions when Lenin or Stalin made short-lived concessions to capitalism, the Times heralded Russia's "new capitalism" as another victory of human nature over "a utopian and doctrinaire system." Finally,
the Times remarked on April 3, 1944, that state capitalism made the Soviet Union in some ways more capitalistic than the United States. But approval of Russian economics did not imply immediate acceptance of all aspects of the Russian regime. The editorial just cited concluded with an admonition that the lack of individual liberty in the Soviet Union demonstrated the danger of a merger of political and economic power in the hands of one man or one group. Though the Times continued, upon occasion, to decry the lack of Russian liberty, even this issue soon disappeared as a target for editorial attack. As early as 1943, elements of Russian freedom were noted. It was not surprising that the Times praised the Soviet regime, on the second anniversary of the German attack upon Russia, for creating the material strength which made Russian resistance possible. What was surprising was the praise given the Stalin regime for also helping to harness the spiritual strength of the Russian people; for giving them "a greater sense of their own individual worth and dignity than they had under the Czars." In October 1943, the Times conceded the "advance of liberty in Russia" which had been effected in the turmoil of 1914 to 1917; and the following winter it speculated on the extent of press freedom in Russia. By 1945 the Russian system of government, which had undergone such calumny in earlier years, was said now to rest "on an expressed ideal of the welfare of the common man," despite its differences from the political and economic structure of the United States. Peace-time was anticipated as an era when the individual freedoms of the Russian people would develop without interference.

With an assurance of peace the Russian system may lose some of its harsher characteristics and modify itself in the direction of what we in this country call democracy. War and impending war have been responsible for much that Americans do not pretend to like in the Russian point of view.

Rather than acknowledging the impact of war upon Russo-American friendship and
cooperation, the Times implied here that the war had kept this relationship from being even friendlier. The pin-pricks of peace-time competition would soon burst the bubble of Russo-American friendship, which had been launched by war-time cooperation.

The war-time change-of-mind about the extent of civil rights in Russia followed an equally momentous reversal of feeling regarding the Soviet government. In 1943, 1944, and 1945 the Russian government harvested the fruits of good will which had been sown in New York Times editorials in the preceding year and a half. The extent of the Times' idealization of the Russian government in this period is clearly shown in the newspaper's change of response to the revolution which brought the Bolsheviks into power. No longer was it a revolution of bewhiskered, bomb-throwing Bolsheviks against a legitimate government. By 1943 the Romanoffs were the villains and, probably to avoid embarrassing Soviet leaders, there was no mention of the Liberal government which had been overthrown by the Bolsheviks. However much we might dislike an October Revolution here, the Times observed, we can be thankful that the Russians had their revolution, and that our Russian ally is an able Communist rather than an inept imperialist. 49

It is ten years this month since the United States recognized Soviet Russia and twenty-six years since the Communists seized power in the so-called October Revolution. The mass of Americans wouldn't care to have a similar upheaval, with similar results, here. Nevertheless they have reason to be glad that our Ally on the Eastern Front today is a people who works and fights magnificently and not the corrupt and inept government of the Romanoffs. And they may rejoice in the program of friendship with Russia which President Roosevelt undertook a decade ago.49

On March 31, 1944, the Romanoffs were again resurrected with much the same results. "Out of the imperial rot of 1917," the Times remarked, "a tremendous-ly vigorous new power has risen."50

While the Times was turning up evidence of nationalism, capitalism, and
liberalism in the Russian nation, of course it found similar virtues in Joseph Stalin. Stalin was still regarded as a dictator at the war's end but his rougher aspect had been so gently smoothed over that he was more a benevolent despot than a full-fledged totalitarian. In 1943, Stalin was praised for preparing so early for Russia's apparently inevitable war with Germany. A June commentary stated that

The world pretty well agrees in giving a large part of the credit for the splendid Russian defense to Joseph Stalin's foresight. He planned that defense from the beginning. . . On the part of the Soviet leadership this was a kind of planning for which not only Russia but all the United Nations today have reason to be grateful.51

Nearly a year later, five years of anger against the Russo-German Non-Aggression Treaty were finally forgotten and Stalin's coalition with Hitler was characterized as a wise political move. Stalin had recognized the danger of immediate war with Hitler and had, "for the emergency only and with strong mental reservations," temporarily enlisted in Hitler's camp.52 Earlier in the war, such a comment would have been accompanied by a warning that Stalin might harbor the same mental reservations while fighting Hitler.

In 1945, Stalin received editorial praise from the New York Times for his cooperation with America and Britain, for his superb leadership of a nation which had been in direst straits, and for his efforts for international peace. The foundation for this sympathy for Stalin was laid on October 23, 1944, when the Soviet premier was pictured as a kindly old dictator who sometimes had trouble keeping his subordinates in check. If there were squabbles with Russia, they could be accounted to the behavior of unruly underlings:

It is a favorable symptom that the closer we get to Marshal Stalin himself the more friendly the atmosphere is. Russian publications have been savage in their denunciations of the Polish Government in London. . . . In taking this position they have hit hard, though indirectly, at British and American policy.
But Mr. Stalin, at Tuesday evening's dinner in honor of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden, spoke warmly of British and American achievements and earnestly of 'the need for continued cooperation to insure continued world peace.' There are small-minded people in Russia as in other countries. Even in a controlled State they have a chance to do some harm. Marshal Stalin, when he speaks publicly and for himself, gives every sign of not being one of them. He seems to see, as most of us in this country do, that mutual friendship based on compromise within the limits of justice, is the key to mutual security.53

Stalin was as popular to the Times as he had been to Hitler and von Ribbentrop at the conclusion of their negotiations with Stalin and Molotov. Hitler was convinced that the Russo-German cooperation would survive so long as Stalin was not "replaced by some extremist." He told Admiral Raeder on November 25, 1939, that

As long as Stalin is in power, it is certain that [Russia] will adhere strictly to the pact made. Her political attitude may change after years of building up her internal strength, particularly if Stalin is overthrown or dies.54

And von Ribbentrop was even more elated by the success of his mission to Moscow. He told Count Ciano, the Italian foreign minister, that Stalin had become the champion of Russian nationalism. At a time when the German state was preparing to expand in all directions, Ribbentrop was pleased to believe that the Russians would confine their communism to their own neighborhood. He was positive that Stalin had abandoned his desires for a world revolution, and he expected Russia soon to become a "normal" state. In later years, as Americans happily believed that their Russian ally had no plans for a world revolution, the Nazis resurrected the "Bolshevist bogey" for its propaganda value against a Russian enemy. Apparently faith in the "nationalization" of Russian communism was endemic to allies of the Soviet Union.

One group of the "small-minded people" who temporarily escaped from under the benevolent thumb of Stalin were the newspaper editors. While Stalin was at his friendliest, some Russian newspapers became so violent in their attacks upon the West that the Times temporarily entertained images of a Russian freedom of the press which permitted the worst features of newspaper competition to exist even in the Soviet Union. This attitude became particularly evident in the
winter of 1943-1944, when Soviet newspapers launched rapid-fire assaults against Wendell Wilkie for an article which seemed to be strongly pro-Russian, against alleged British plans for a separate peace with Hitler, and against the Vatican for its failure to discredit Italian Fascists. During the first four months of 1944, there were frequent references to the enlargement of Russian press freedoms. Most were mocking ones, particularly those commemorating a new addition to the world of capitalistic, competitive newspapers. Yet there was a trace of seriousness in many of the Times' reflections on the changing status of the Russian newspaper. No joke was intended when an editorial hopefully asserted that "perhaps Pravda spoke without Mr. Stalin's knowledge" when it followed up its attack upon Wilkie with an equally devastating castigation of British diplomats. Nor was the insistence that Stalin "lose no time in rebuking the editors of Izvestia for their comments on the presence of American troops in Iran" intended as humor. The assumption that the actions of the Soviet press were directed by the Soviet government caused many Americans to attack the government of the U.S.S.R. in retaliation for the angry diatribes of Pravda and Izvestia. The Times, instead, preferred to believe that Soviet press attacks upon America and Americans no longer indicated government policy. The playing down of Soviet press attacks as the work of underlings highlights the extent of the New York Times' desire to "like" the Russians, come what may.

Russian newspaper attacks were one of many events, in the closing months of the war, which might have encouraged the New York journal to repudiate its support for the Soviet Union; yet in September, 1945, the Times' faith in the Russians appeared at an all-time high. Neither the sharp tongue of Pravda nor the large-scale conflicts so apparent in the formation of the United Nations nor the more localized disputes over the rule of Berlin or of Vienna could frighten away the dove of peace which the Times insisted was on the shoulder of Joseph Stalin. Times editorials in the last year of the war did not ignore conflicts
between Russia and her western allies, but a glimpse of the brighter side usually accompanied such commentaries. In the midst of the bitter controversy over the destinies of embattled, embittered Poland, the Times reminded its readers that "a just, secure and lasting peace" was still possible. Unlike so many Americans, who were disillusioned by the disputes which kept postponing the peaceful millennium which was to have begun in 1919, Times editorialists emphasized Russian cooperation. Their reaction to pessimists who in 1945 made a full-time job out of "viewing with alarm," was demonstrated in this paragraph from a June, 1945, editorial.

In some quarters the San Francisco Conference seems to be regarded as a serialized detective story, with a victim or two, a stupid detective, a clever detective, a villain and a plot. . . . In the quarters referred to, Russia is naturally cast as the villain: the Russian language is difficult; Russian ideas about some basic matters are novel and even illogical to us; Russian diplomacy is not as smooth as the sort we are used to; above all, Russia is the most formidable land Power in the world at this moment. In some quarters, therefore, there has been a tendency to play up questions on which Russia did not yield or was reluctant to yield and to play down those on which she gave way.58

The newspaper set for itself the task of offsetting this unfavorable balance, and the very next day it asserted that the Russians were "just as eager to get along with us as we are to get along with them."59

This confidence in Russo-American cooperation was soon strengthened by the military union of the two nations against the Japanese Empire, the sole survivor of the Axis partnership. For the first few weeks after the Japanese air attack at Pearl Harbor had drawn the United States into the war, Times editorials had angrily declared that Russia, too, must war against the Japanese. These demands were not repeated later in the war, however. Even while assuming, late in 1943, that Russia must share in any post-war settlement of the problems of the Far East, the Times did not demand that the Russians leap post-haste into a war with
Japan. It preferred that the Reds first finish the job in Europe. Cautioning against the demands of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and other senators that the Soviet Union break its Non-Aggression Treaty with Japan by providing American bomber bases in the Maritime Provinces, the newspaper pointed out that it would be unwise to expect Russia to leave herself open for a war at her back while still fully occupied by the European war. The editorial concluded:

Once Germany's defeat has been accomplished, the situation in the Far East may change. It would be unreasonable to expect Russia to remain a spectator to a new settlement in Asia. In order to have a powerful voice in this settlement she may choose to take a hand in the final reckoning with Japan, but at her own timing and under her own power. Then, and presumably only then, would the Siberian bases come into play. Meantime most of us will be satisfied with the work that Russia is doing in the West.60

Naturally Premier Stalin's denunciation of Japan as an aggressor, in November, 1944, was welcomed by the Times, which happily speculated that the Russians would probably soon unite with their allies in the Far Eastern phase of World War II. Of course the Russians would eventually attack Japan. The only question was "whether she will come in as soon as possible after the defeat of Germany, and with full force, or whether she will play a more passive role and come in only on the kill." In any event, the Russian repudiation of Japan was interpreted by the Times as an expression of the "growing solidarity among the Big Three nations."61

The same happy comment accompanied the Soviet denunciation of the Russo-Japanese Non-Aggression Treaty five months later, shortly before the San Francisco Conference convened. In addition to emphasizing "Russia's solidarity with her Western allies" and smoothing the path of the San Francisco Conference, the wreckage of the treaty also spelled the doom of Japan, according to the Times.62 The newspaper was so confident of Russian good will in Asia that it encouraged the continuation of lend-lease aid to Russia after the war in Europe...
had ended; even though Russia had not yet declared war against Japan, and no one but the participants in the Yalta Conference and other top government officials knew that she was pledged to enter the war. Correctly describing Russia and Japan as "enemies of long standing," the Times explained that American arms in Siberia would help the war effort even if Russia did not attack the Japanese, because

If the Soviet has strong forces in Siberia along the Manchurian border, Japan must keep mobilized there an equally strong army. The more Russians armed with modern weapons, the more men Japan must deploy in front of them. If no hostile shot ever is fired across the border, the mere presence of a strong Soviet army in Siberia will have an important effect on the war.63

Of course the Times still hoped that Soviet Russia would go to war against Japan, but it intended to make the best of the situation even if this did not occur.

Russia's eventual entrance into the coalition against Japan (on August 8, 1945, two days after the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan and six days before the Japanese capitulation) was a fitting climax to the Russo-American alliance, for it was Russia's Far Eastern policies which were the justification for leaving the Soviet Union on the pedestal which it had occupied through much of the war. There were complaints in editorials then about Russian activities in conquered Europe, but Far Eastern cooperation was so smooth that it overshadowed European disputes.

Never during World War II was so much favorable comment compressed into the editorials of a single week as during the initial week of the post-war era. Two days after the Japanese surrender was signed, an editorial expressed delight in the progress of democracy in eastern and central Europe, in China, in India, and in virtually all the rest of the world. Of course the Times gave greatest credit to the United States, but the "dictatorship of the proletariat" ranked second as a leader of "resurgent democracy." Encouraging the growth of democ-
'racy, the Times said, is

the fact that Russia is turning out to be a more reasonable partner both among the Big Five and among the United Nations in general than some of her previous actions had suggested. The habit of unilateral action dies hard, but the statesman-like agreement with China and the growing moderation of Russia's grip on Eastern Europe are gratifying evidence of progress. The war has produced some fundamental changes in Russia, in outlook and power, which have subordinated the world-revolutionary aims of the Communist party to the needs of the Russian state.

Even the Russian occupation of the Kurile Islands, far more than a mere wartime occupation, was not protested by the Times. When the Soviet Union claimed proprietorship of the islands, the Times calmly accepted the fait accompli as a matter of slight importance to this country.

It is to [the Russians'] paramount strategic interest, and not ours, that they should have such bases. . . . In Japanese hands they hemmed the Russians in and served as a springboard for the invasion of Alaska. In Russian hands they will bring an ally no nearer to the United States than she already is, and interpose an effective bulwark against any new Japanese advance.

And on September 11, 1945 (less than five years before Russia's North Korean satellite attempted by military means to extend its rule south of the thirty-eighth parallel), the Times contrasted the American occupation of Korea unfavorably with that of the Russians. Sharply critical of the extent to which Japanese officials remained in authority in the American sector of Korea, the Times angrily asked if Americans were "less capable than the Russians in managing to get along without the Japanese."

These friendly comments on the Soviet Union were made possible by the concessions which Stalin had made to the Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek a few weeks before. On August 17, a Times editorial expressed pleasure that America, Britain, and Russia had apparently determined to deal only with the Chinese Nationalists.

A week later, the presumed Stalinist policy of non-intervention in Chinese internal
affairs was accepted by the Times as a wise one for the United States as well. The editorial warned that the Allies should avoid interfering with the domestic problems of another nation, however much they might dislike conditions there. The editorial praised the declaration in the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance (signed the next day) that the Communist question in China was strictly an internal matter and that no outside nation—neither capitalistic nor communistic—should intervene. Terming the already simmering struggle between the forces of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tze-tung a civil war, the Times recalled that

we greatly resented any indications of intervention in our own civil war. We should not attempt to do unto others what we would not accept for ourselves—unless intervention by others converts a national into an international affair.68

When the treaty was signed, the Times added that

A victory for peace as great as any scored on the battlefield has been won by Russian and Chinese statesmanship. . . .

. . . through these agreements Russia solemnly undertakes to respect the sovereignty and territorial entity of China, and to refrain from any interference in her internal affairs. Thereby Russia becomes a partner in America's traditional policy toward China. . . .

. . . The clouds of civil war that have darkened China's horizon are already beginning to recede. . . .

. . . it is one of the virtues of the Russo-Chinese agreements that they are based on reality and mutual interest instead of abstract theory, and it is this element which makes them the great contribution toward peace that they so plainly are.69

With the prospects for a really united United Nations in the Far East brightened, non-cooperation in Europe seemed less fearsome. Earlier in August there had been complaints about the Soviet-style regimes in Austria and Bulgaria and about the efforts of Greek Communists to overthrow the English-sponsored Greek government, but they did not seem so important after Premier Stalin's seeming good intentions were demonstrated by the Sino-Russian agreement. Although the seeds of future disputes were forgotten, however, they were ready
to spring up whenever the protective cover provided by the Stalin-Chiang pact had worn thin. Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Germany, and nearly every other country on the periphery of the Russian titan were soon to become the subjects of quarrels between America and Russia. And Stalin was no longer obliged to curry favor by a diplomatic maneuver such as the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance. Thus the New York Times' support for the Soviet Union, which was on an extraordinarily high plane immediately after V-J Day, underwent a precipitous decline in the months ahead. Of course the editorial writers' confidence in post-war cooperation waned when the post-war period was actually upon them and the long-awaited peace-time unity of action between Britain, and America and the Soviet Union failed to materialize.

So many hopes had been pinned upon the dream of Russo-American friendship that the reaction was severe when Anglo-American competition with Nazi Germany seemed to be supplanted by competition with Soviet Russia. Yet the disillusionment which followed World War II need not have been so severe. Knowing the temporary nature of earlier deviations from set policy by the Russian leadership, Americans should not have been so amazed when Stalin resumed his planning for the inevitable Communist wars against capitalism. The alliance of Communist Russia with capitalist America and Britain was a marriage of expediency for both sides. Yet Americans found that sort of "affair" impossible. For them, romance had to accompany marriage. Americans sought, and thought they found, romance where there was only self-interest. Former Ambassador Walter Bedell Smith has described Joseph Stalin as "a true Georgian hero--a great and good friend or an implacable, dangerous enemy. It is difficult for him to be anything inbetween." But a study of American international relations indicates that whatever Stalin's personality might be, Americans would have made it fit their needs. When Stalin was at Hitler's side he was an implacable, dangerous enemy. When he had changed sides in the great war he was converted into a
great and good friend. And he again became an implacable, dangerous enemy when he dissolved his marriage of convenience (on February 9, 1946) by reaffirming the doctrines of Marxism and Leninism and exhorting his people to "extraordinary efforts in preparation for the inevitable wars which must be expected so long as the capitalist system exists."\textsuperscript{71}

By April 1, 1946, a public opinion survey demonstrated that seventy-one per cent of the Americans contacted disapproved of Russian foreign policies. Asked what should be done about Soviet foreign policy, an even fifty per cent urged forceful action such as "be firm," "sever relations," etc.; only sixteen per cent urged that the United States "go to the United Nations," "work things out," or "appease Russia"; twelve per cent said that nothing should be done; and twenty-two per cent either had no opinion or gave answers other than those offered in the poll.\textsuperscript{72} Other polls of that spring and summer indicated that Americans believed Soviet global ambitions would cause Russia to be the aggressor in another world war within the next twenty-five years, that Russian goals were offensive rather than defensive in their dominance over the satellite nations of Eastern Europe, that the United Nations could not count upon cooperation from the Soviet Union, and that Russia was not a peace-loving nation.\textsuperscript{73}

The erratic course of American opinion of the Soviet Union since World War II is ably described by Pauline Tompkins in American-Russian Relations in the Far East. She said:

Recalling the ecstatic eulogies heaped upon our Russian ally by Americans of all political and social walks during the war years, and the coals of wrath now so freely showered on the "Red menace," one is confronted with a most dramatic illustration of the inconstancy of international friendship. The build-up of American-Soviet cordiality during the war was motivated by naivete, idealism, and expediency, and the main initiative and enthusiasm were American, not Russian.\textsuperscript{74}

The New York Times was probably no more naive, no more idealistic, and no more expedient than other leading newspaper in this country. Yet it provides a
splendid case study of this build-up of American-Soviet cordiality. At the same time that editorials justified expediency as the reason for an alliance with Russia, they idealized America's Russian ally until it appeared that self-interest was trivial as a cause of American support for the Soviet Union.

Probably the post-war reaction against Soviet Russia would have been less intense if it had been based upon a more realistic foundation. If we had recognized, throughout the war, that Russian goals would undoubtedly remain different from those of the United States but that there would be gains for both parties so long as some semblance of cooperation was possible, there might have been a less artificial post-war world. But there was no expectation of serious conflicts between the two great powers. An artificial Russia had been created in the American mind—a Russia which was capitalistic, nationalistic, and religious. When the war ended and the Soviets shed their cloak of affability, many realized with a start that the ideas of Stalin's "new Bolsheviks" were no more amenable to western democracy than were the ideas of the Old Bolsheviks of Lenin's day.

Americans have too seldom looked realistically at an enemy or an ally. Prior to Vietnam, at least, an enemy of the United States must also be an enemy of democracy, of liberty, of all that decent men hold dear. An ally of the United States automatically becomes a defender of these qualities. Whether the world can survive enough wars to teach the United States the folly of such blindness in its international dealings is doubtful. Only through awareness of our past mistakes can we be warned against their repetition.

Americans should not look smugly upon the comments of the New York Times. The newspaper published foolish statements, both when the Russians could do nothing right and when they could do nothing wrong. And such errors were heightened by the failure ever to look back and say, "We realize that we held a directly opposite view only a year ago, but now we can see that we were
wrong then." Yet the New York Times was not alone in such attitudes. They were shared by most of us. The follies of the Times, first in its attacks and later in its glorification of the Soviet Union, are only a reflection of the follies of the American people in international affairs.
FOOTNOTES


3 Angelo Rossi, The Russo-German Alliance, (Boston, 1951), passim.


6 "Unity Comes First," May 2, 1943, p. 22.

7 "Mr. Stalin to the Times," May 6, 1943, p. 18.

8 "To the Poles and Russians," December 30, 1943, p. 18. Similar examples in issues of May 9, 1944; June 15, 1944; and December 16, 1944.

9 "The Invisible Boundary," January 5, 1944, p. 16.


11 "Russia's Break with Poland," April 27, 1943, p. 22.


14 "Poland and Russia," October 3, 1944, p. 22.


16 "Again the Big Three," June 14, 1945, p. 18.

17 "Poland's Rebirth," June 25, 1945, p. 16.

18 "Message to the Conquered," May 1, 1944, p. 14. The same criticism was to be made of Anglo-American diplomacy in Germany, "Russia 'goes in' and we, after a little while, follow its example.") on August 4, 1945; and of American policy in Korea ("are we less capable than the Russians in managing to get along without the Japanese?") on September 11, 1945.

19 "Climax at Budapest," December 12, 1944, p. 22.

21. "Aid for Stalingrad," February 2, 1944, p. 20. "... Moscow has already broached the subject of sending representatives of each of its republics to the international commissions for Europe's reconstruction, which would mean that Russia would be represented by sixteen delegates instead of one, thus smothering the voice of both the United States and the British Commonwealth."


26. "Topics of the Times," May 1, 1945, p. 22. This unsigned editorial column custom takes a lighter, and sometimes more speculative, view of the news.


35. "The A.L.P. 'Farmers'," March 30, 1944, p. 20. "Redbaiting is a thankless job when the authentic Russian Reds are doing so much for our common cause. If the American Communists had been as good Americans as the Russian Communists have been good Russians one wouldn't dream of doing or saying anything to annoy them. They haven't been, and we have little faith that they ever will be."


31
40 "Russia Change: Anthems," December 22, 1943, p. 22
41 "Topics of the Times," May 27, 1945, p. 8E.
42 "Change in Russia," July 4, 1943, p. 8E.
45 "Topics of the Times," October 3, 1943, p. 8E.
46 See below, pp. 17-18.
47 "As Russia Marches West," January 28, 1945, p. 8E.
52 "Topics of the Times," June 29, 1944, p. 22.
54 Quoted by Angelo Rossi, op. cit., p. 75.
56 "Americans in Iran," November 6, 1944, p. 18.
58 "Russia at San Francisco," June 13, 1945, p. 22.
59 "Again the Big Three," June 14, 1945, p. 18.
60 "Russia and Japan," October 9, 1943, p. 12.
61 "Russia Faces Japan," November 8, 1944, p. 16.
"Lead Lease to Siberia," June 27, 1945, p. 18.


"Russia in the Kuriles," September 9, 1945, p. 8E.


Walter Bedell Smith, My Three Years in Moscow (New York, 1950), p. 63.


Public Opinion Quarterly, X, 264. Seven per cent expressed approval of Soviet foreign policies.

This survey is based upon many polls published in the summer and autumn issues of Vol. X (1946) of the Public Opinion Quarterly.
