

The New York Times

Published every day by The New York Times Company

ADOLPH S. OCHS, *Publisher 1896-1935*

ORVIL E. DRYFOOS, *Publisher 1961-1963*



Flight From Moscow

When Stalin died fourteen years ago it would have been ludicrous to envisage a day in which the daughter of that twentieth-century Ivan the Terrible would seek and find refuge with United States authorities.

Later, when the systematic campaign to destroy the Stalin legend was in full swing, it would have seemed equally incredible that a child of the dead tyrant could ever get into a position where defection was possible. The tragic fate of Trotsky's children served as a reminder of the grim possibilities that seemed in store for Stalin's progeny. In that sense, the fact that Miss Stalin could flee is an indication of how the Soviet Union has changed—and for the better—since 1953.

Not only Russia but the world has changed—so much, in fact, that Miss Stalin's escape poses awkwardnesses for all the world's top leaders. In the Kremlin there is presumably apprehension about her intelligence and propaganda value to the West. She may have embarrassing disclosures to make about past and present Soviet leaders.

Mao Tse-tung, no doubt, will see confirmation of his charges against the Kremlin in the flight of this "true Marxist's" daughter from "revisionist" Moscow, but his propagandists will find it difficult to explain why Svetlana sought help from Washington rather than Peking.

As for this country, the possibility that Miss Stalin's actions may introduce complications into the effort to win a *détente* with Moscow must seriously temper rejoicing over a historic intelligence coup.

Miss Stalin is the daughter of one of the bloodiest dictators of world history—a man who at the same time was among the great formative influences on this century. But Svetlana is not responsible for the sins of her father. Americans will wish her well in her new freedom and await with fascination the light she can throw on the still murky doings in the Kremlin during and after her father's unforgettable primacy.