

THE KREMLIN WALLS WON'T TREMBLE

But a Legend Has Been Crushed in Svetlana's "Twenty Letters"

By HARRISON E. SALISBURY

TO TACKLE the question head on: No. There is no revelation, no "now it can be told gossip," no great Kremlin secret brought to light by Svetlana Alliluyeva to justify the hubbub and controversy that *Twenty Letters to a Friend* (Harper & Row, \$5.95) has touched off.

Mme. Alliluyeva says nothing which will cause the Moscow walls to tremble. She does not even mention the names of the present Soviet duumvirate—Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and Premier Alexei Kosygin. And almost everything she says about her father's extermination of her family and relatives has been known for nearly thirty years.

Nor, in my opinion, is the impression of such early readers as George Kennan that Mme. Alliluyeva possesses a major literary talent borne out by her slender volume. Her style is fresh, straightforward, honest, rather old-fashioned, often sentimental. Her viewpoint sometimes seems naïve and her philosophical passages narrowly skirt banality. Even in her facts and interpretation of murky events of the Stalin period there is much that serious students will challenge.

Yet, all this being said, Mme. Alliluyeva has written a compelling account of the nature of life under Stalin, an indictment of the system which produced and tolerated him, a powerful exposé of the torment to which her father and the Soviet mechanism subjected the Russian people. No one can read this simple book and still have faith in the Soviet legend. Mme. Alliluyeva has crushed it beyond restoration.

Moscow's instinct was correct when it sought by every possible means to discredit in advance what Svetlana Alliluyeva might have to say. But, perhaps because the officials themselves are so much the product of the Soviet system they feared the wrong thing. They thought that the Central Intelligence Agency intended to utilize Mme. Alliluyeva as a propaganda bombshell. They expected that veteran anti-Soviet specialists would concoct some kind of vituperation against the current Kremlin leadership which would muddy the holiday atmosphere of the fiftieth anniversary of Lenin's seizure of power, November 7, 1917.



Hoping to thwart the CIA, the Soviet police hastily circulated a stolen copy of Mme. Alliluyeva's manuscript, which she had left behind in Moscow. This, they believed, would "expose" any CIA tinkering with her words. But the strategy misfired. The publication of Mme. Alliluyeva's book reveals that there are no differences between the Moscow copy and that published by Harper & Row except for smoothing of literary style, deletion of repetitive paragraphs, and some emotional passages about her first love affair.

Indeed, the Soviet intelligence authorities missed the whole point. By circulating the stolen version they merely provided irrefutable verification of the authenticity of the book. And they completely overlooked what gives the narrative its deadly force. For this flows from the very simplicity, the girlish sincerity, the dogged perseverance with

which Mme. Alliluyeva tells what it was like to grow up in the Kremlin with a father whom she worshiped but whom she gradually came to realize was a mad tyrant, surrounded by vain, dangerous, plotting, inhuman, ruthless courtiers.

It is the knowledge that the man who curries favor with his daughter by heavy-handed letters is at the same time sending to prison, to torture, to death the little girl's favorite aunts and uncles which casts so macabre a light over Mme. Alliluyeva's story.

First, we see Bukharin gaily inhabiting the summer dacha compound where Stalin lived as a Victorian pater familias amid a clutter of cousins, uncles, aunts, political cronies, and hangers-on from the Caucasus. Next, Bukharin has gone to the execution chambers of the Lubyanka but "Bukharin's fox," a pet he tamed, wanders the Kremlin grounds year after year, sometimes cowering in the shrubbery, sometimes howling at the midnight moon.

We see Svetlana's mother, Nadezhda Alliluyeva, rushing from Party function to Party function, hectically studying, running a big Kremlin household, hurrying in for a quick look at her children at bedtime, more and more upset at the cruel and sinister nature of her husband, finally shooting herself in a moment of despondency. We read her daughter's terse comment: "People were a lot more honest and emotional in those days. If they didn't like life the way it was, they shot themselves. Who does that kind of thing now?" The only major political revelation in the book, incidentally, is the fact that Nadezhda Alliluyeva left behind a political testament denouncing Stalin. Is it still preserved in the police archives?

The heroine of Mme. Alliluyeva's narrative is her mother, a patent idealization. The single letter that the author quotes from her mother is severe, demanding, distant. To her five-and-a-half-year-old daughter Nadezhda Alliluyeva wrote: "Please write and let me know whether you've decided to be good or not. You decide. You're a big girl and are able to think for yourself." In con-

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trast, Stalin was writing his daughter at the same time: "How are your dolls? I thought I'd be getting an order from you soon, but no. Too bad. You're hurting your little papa's feelings. Never mind. I kiss you. . . ." Yet, Mme. Alliluyeva reports that she once asked her nurse, "Why is it I love Grandpa better than Grandma yet I love Mama better than Papa?"

Her memories of her mother are sparse. But she recalls that her father was always kissing her and fondling her. While Mme. Alliluyeva insists that she condemns Stalin for his innumerable crimes the reader perceives that the love for her father, plain and obvious when she was a young girl, has not really diminished in adulthood, despite the knowledge of what he did to her family and to two or three generations of her countrymen.

Stalin is not the villain of his daughter's book. That role is reserved for Lavrenti P. Beria, whom Stalin brought to Moscow in 1938 to be his third chief of secret police. Beria is the *eminence gris*, the treacherous Georgian who works on Stalin's weaknesses and deepens in the dictator the worst of his delusions of conspiracy.

The story acquires a strong (and probably quite accurate) Caucasian flavor in Mme. Alliluyeva's telling. All the chief participants came from the Caucasus. The Alliluyev family had spent years in Baku. Stalin was from Gori, in Georgia; Beria from Mingrelia, a small Georgian principality; Abel Yenukidze, Sergo Ordzhonikidze, the Svanidzes (relatives of Stalin's first wife), the Mikoyans, Sergei Kirov, and many others who made up the Stalin inner circle of the late 1920s and early 1930s came from the Caucasus.

All, Mme. Alliluyeva says, feared and hated Beria. She asserts that his role in the Caucasus was highly ambiguous, that he worked first with the Dashnak Armenian nationalists, and later for the Bolsheviks. Caught by the Communists in an act of treason, he was ordered executed by Sergei Kirov, then chief of operations in the Caucasus. But in the confusion the order somehow never was carried out.

Mme. Alliluyeva's account of Beria's duplicity in the Caucasus closely resembles the official allegations made against Beria following his arrest June 26, 1953, after Stalin's death. He was then charged with secret connections with the nationalist Mussavat government in Azerbaijan and the Menshevik intelligence service in Georgia.

The old Caucasian Bolsheviks knew of Beria's double-dealings, Mme. Alliluyeva maintains. When he got power he set about ridding himself of those who were aware of his past. She blames Beria rather than her father for the as-

sassination of Kirov in Leningrad, December 1, 1934. This was the act Stalin used as an excuse for his purges of the old Bolsheviks. She sees Beria's hand in the succession of tragedies that followed year after year—1936, 1937, 1938, and on down to the end of her father's life (when even she was not immune from his paranoid suspicions).

It is in this insistence upon the "evil influence" of Beria that most serious students would challenge Mme. Alliluyeva. Of her father she says: "He was simpler and could be led up the garden path by someone with Beria's craftiness. Beria was aware of my father's weaknesses. . . . The spell cast by this terrifying evil genius on my father was extremely powerful and it never failed to work."

The conception of Beria as a Communist Svengali who caused Stalin to exterminate most of his relatives, most of the old Bolsheviks, and hundreds of thousands of ordinary decent working men and women of Russia is difficult to accept in the light of the purges carried out by Beria's predecessors as chiefs of secret police, Genrikh Yagoda and Nikolai Yezhov. Stalin's techniques did not change from Yagoda to Yezhov to Beria. Only the names of the police chiefs differed.

Mme. Alliluyeva pictures Beria as

maintaining paramount influence in Stalin's inner circle to the very moment of the dictator's death, March 5, 1953. The actual situation, as carefully reconstructed by historians, was that Beria had steadily lost hold since the spring of 1951 because of an intrigue directed against him, probably by Stalin. The man who pulled the strings against Beria may have been Stalin's *chef de cabinet*, General Alexander Poskrebyshev. Mme. Alliluyeva contends that Poskrebyshev vanished from her father's entourage before he died. The majority of specialists believe he did not disappear until the day after Stalin's death.

The most vivid passage in *Twenty Letters* is the description of Stalin's death. This account closely coincides with that of Nikita Khrushchev after the event, which reached the West at second and third hand. It reveals Stalin's final isolation—living alone in his country house, sleeping on a couch in the same room where he took his meals at one end of his cluttered work table, surrounded by police agents, alienated from his daughter, his chief physician in jail at his personal order, dosing himself with pills, finally suffering a stroke and lying on the floor for hours before someone dared to enter the room and found him on the rug beside his sofa.

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Rasputin and the Romanov Fall

Nicholas and Alexandra, by Robert K. Massie (Atheneum, 584 pp. \$10), depicts the last years of the Russian monarchy, and attributes its collapse to the illness of the tsarevich and the consequent ascendancy of Rasputin. Sidney Heitman is a professor of history at Colorado State University and the author of "The Path to Socialism in Russia."

By SIDNEY HEITMAN

IN THE half century since the fall of the Romanov dynasty, there have been exhaustive studies of the underworld of garrets and cellars and places of exile where the Russian Revolution was spawned. There have been few comparable efforts, however, to examine the personalities and events in the gilded palaces where the fate of the monarchy was actually sealed in the years before the First World War.

Robert Massie's *Nicholas and Alexandra* is intended to fill this conspicuous gap. It is a masterful biography of the last Romanovs, from Nicholas II's acces-



—From the book.

Nicholas and Alexandra aboard the *Standart* — an anguished couple.

sion in 1896 to the brutal murder of the imperial family in a remote Siberian village in 1918. Based on the diaries, memoirs, and personal papers of leading figures in the Russian court and others who shared their intimate lives, it vividly

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to perhaps \$15,000,000, and some tens of millions would be spent before the project bore fruit."

R. HAMILTON.

Kensington, Md.

TOO BAD you didn't get a linguist for your panel on post-Vietnam science. One thing we need from scientists is an improvement in the quality of language education in the high schools and the grade schools.

PAUL HOPPER.

Philadelphia, Pa.

Big Mistake

THERE WAS A really stupendous error in my letter to you [SR, Aug. 5]. It is about half-way down the third column of page 54: "Some 5,000,000 cubic kilometers, or some 5×10^6 tons." Five million cubic kilometers is 6×10^{15} tons. The next line in my letter was correct: "This is equivalent to 10 meters of water over the entire surface of the earth."

HAROLD C. UREY.

La Jolla, Calif.

Bigger Man

AS A CANADIAN I read with much interest the articles under the general heading "Canada's Unappreciated Role as Scientific Innovator" [SR, Sept. 2]. Thank you for them.

May I supplement what Dr. Dyson Rose and John Marier wrote about Dr. Brock Chisholm? Dr. Chisholm was not only "director of personnel selection" of the Canadian Army but was director-general of medical services 1942-44; he was not only "secretary [actually he was Executive Secretary] of the Interim Committee of the World Health Organization" but was from 1948 to 1953 the first director-general of that Organization, and in that capacity was largely responsible for the phenomenal progress made in the early days of WHO.

H. L. KEENLEYSIDE,
Chairman,
British Columbia Hydro
and Power Authority.

Vancouver, B. C.

Curie Point

CONTRARY TO your statement [SR, Sept. 2], the Curie Point is not "the temperature gradient at which a given measure of radioactivity occurs." It is the temperature below which a ferromagnetic substance will retain its magnetism in the absence of an outside magnetic field. In other words, it is the temperature at which a ferromagnetic substance becomes paramagnetic.

RICHARD L. CAIN.

Santa Rosa, N. Mex.

Oil Sands and Shales

IN HIS ARTICLE, "New Frontier: The Tar Sands" [SR, Sept. 2], J. L. confuses tar sands and oil shale. They are not the same. They are as different as petroleum and coal.

The deposits along the Athabaska river are indeed tar sands, and, as the article correctly states, the tar can be separated from the sand by treatment with water. Steam or kerosene may also be used.

The Green River formation, however, is oil shale, and you can't get petroleum (or more exactly, shale oil) from it by "squeezing," or by treatment with water or any other liquid. It must be heated to at least 900°F before it yields the liquid product called shale oil.

To imply that it is as easy to recover "petroleum" from the Green River formation as from the Athabaska deposits is not only grossly incorrect, but leads the uninformed reader to grossly underestimate the difficulty (and therefore the cost) of processing oil shale.

HERTSELL S. CONWAY,
Supervisor,
Information Services,
American Oil Company.

Whiting, Ind.

EDITOR'S NOTE: To complete the record, it seems appropriate to quote the following passage from a letter published in "Science" over the name of John W. Hand, of the oil

shale consulting firm of Cameron and Jones, Inc., in Denver:

Oil shale is not a recently discovered resource—its existence and utility having been known before our modern petroleum industry was born. Viable industries have existed in many parts of the world—Scotland, Sweden, Spain, and South Africa, to name a few. At present, oil shale is being put to beneficial use in China and Russia, largely based on technology developed by our own Bureau of Mines and by Japanese engineers.

We would further point out that "achieving optimum development of the Green River shale" has been studied by many good minds both in industry and government for many decades. The body of knowledge to do this is available today. What is needed is a more articulate citizenry urging that this be done in the public interest.

Kremlin Walls

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The dramatic message to be drawn from the book has to do with the USSR itself and the spirit of post-Stalin Russia. Mme. Alliluyeva wrote her book four years ago. She says she never expected it to be published. The internal evidence suggests the contrary: that she wrote it in the hope and conviction that it would be published not outside but inside the Soviet Union. She does not identify the "friend" who encouraged her to write the letters, although she has indicated that he is a scientist and that he is still in Russia. In any event, the letters were not directed to Brijesh Singh, the Indian Communist resident in Moscow with whom she was soon to fall in love and whose illness and death led to her leaving her country, first to take Singh's ashes to India and then, in a gathering mood of repulsion for the banality of the present Soviet régime, to ask permission to reside along the banks of the Ganges, there to meditate and mourn the loss of her Indian husband, and, failing that, to throw herself dramatically upon the good offices of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, seeking such refuge as the United States might be able to offer.

At half a dozen points Mme. Alliluyeva speaks with confidence of the changes that lie just over the horizon in Russia, of the "Decembrists of tomorrow" who will teach the present generation how to live; of the new spirit which has come to the land since her father's death so that her children are able to live freely and without surveillance. She speaks of her own deep love and affection for Russia; "no matter how cruel and harsh," of the "eternal good which gives Russia strength and helps

preserve her true self," and of her certainty that "Good triumphs over everything, though it frequently happens too late—not before the very best people have perished unjustly, senselessly, without rhyme and reason."

Mme. Alliluyeva rejects the forces typified by her father, those "who wanted to set themselves above the Revolution, who wanted to speed up its progress and make tomorrow come today, those who tried to do good by doing evil," those who sacrificed millions senselessly. She does not believe that anyone in honesty can affix the label "progressive" to a régime and a system rooted in tyranny and blood. But, she believes, the people of Russia "will have their say." They will give to their country a new sense of purpose.

"I SEE YOU shining, my beloved, chaotic, all-knowing, heartless Russia," she writes. "Nothing will ever blacken you in my eyes. If your goodness and truth hadn't lit my way I'd have given up long ago. You are warmth and light. You make me feel that life on this beautiful green earth I love so well still holds some promise."

The best hope that these lines possess validity, that the future of the Soviet Union must be viewed in terms of optimism, is furnished by the fact of their being written by the daughter of the man whose terror on earth was second only to that of Ivan the Terrible.

While Mme. Alliluyeva now doubts that "fundamental changes in the direction of real democracy" are as near in Russia as she thought in 1963, her living example suggests that the Russian people themselves will decide their fate and that this decision will be in accordance with fundamental principles of human decency, which neither Stalin nor his system were able to obliterate.

1) whether the diagnostic process can be explained in sufficiently logical terms for mathematical manipulation; and 2) whether the data necessary can be obtained and expressed in terms of numbers or of probability. If these questions are answered affirmatively, the computer can perform in medical diagnosis. If they are answered negatively, the computer cannot assist in this process, and indeed it is questionable whether physicians perform in the manner they think they do.

WHILE it is no doubt theoretically possible for computers to participate in medical decision-making and diagnosis, there are several arduous and costly steps which must be taken before it can become a reality in the work of most doctors. Here, in contrast to the competitive and economic factors operating to hasten the application of computer technology to laboratory tests or hospital administration, no strong pressures are acting to accelerate the process. If some of the pilot studies now going on in the use of computer diagnosis prove outstandingly helpful in patient care, it is possible that federal grants will be made to hasten the process, particularly in those diseases mentioned earlier. Otherwise this aspect of automation will probably come as a concomitant of the rapidly expanding use of computers in medical administration, laboratory automation, or research. There is really little likelihood that practicing physicians will actively work to get this kind of innovation since it is a completely new and alien process.

We must now consider the way in which computers may contribute to the "technical skill" part of the doctor's job in contrast to the "thinking" portion. Although there are few places in which the combination of computers and electronic or mechanical devices is likely to directly "take over" the doctor's skill, there are many in which this combination may supplement it. In fact, instruments now in use are doing this.

One example of the kind of help these devices can provide in the skilled performance part of medical care is in the area of the reading and interpretation of electrocardiograms (ECGs). The ECG magnetic tape readings are converted by computer program to digital data. The program then translates these digital data into configurations representative of the tape data, indicates which of the configurations are abnormal (as established by clinicians), and compares the abnormal patterns to patterns characteristic of various heart defects. The computer may indicate in a probability statement the odds of a patient's having a particular heart ailment. In this sort of application as a diagnostic aid, it is re-emphasized that if the physician is able

to state his rules of decision with absolute completeness (an extremely difficult task), the computer will be able to perform admirably—giving results consistently, instantaneously, tirelessly, and without error. The physician would then be able to use computer results to support or to check his own final interpretation.

A similar example concerns work done by the computer in "reading" X-rays. At the Tulane University School of Medicine, X-ray films are electronically scanned and converted into a matrix, with a digital representation assigned to each small grid in the matrix, based on the light intensity in the grid. The matrix is maintained in the computer. One use of the data is to sharpen the contrast in certain areas by instructing the computer to increase or decrease the light factor in certain grids and then re-converting the matrix to an X-ray that shows detail not previously noticeable.

Another use is in the monitoring of patients during anesthesia. In a paper published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Drs. Stewart A. Wilber and William S. Derrick have described one application, a particularly informative example because it presents a combination of instrumentation and computer teamwork during a surgical procedure. It also provides a data base for later use in extending knowledge and in providing improved care.

In summary, we may say that automation is already in medicine, will continue to become more important, and will affect all aspects of medical care and practice. The rate at which this new technology will make itself felt in the doctor's practice is conjectural. But it is probably safe to predict that it will not come rapidly, since clinical medicine in general is not ready as yet for the full exploitation of the computer. Those doctors who are associated with large urban hospitals will probably note some change in their patterns of work due to automation within five years, but it may well be ten to fifteen years before significant changes are evident.

—From *Ferment in Medicine*
(W. B. Saunders: \$6.50).

The medical integrity and editorial excellence of *Ferment in Medicine* was recognized by the National Association of Blue Shield Plans, which honored the book's senior author, Dr. Richard M. Magraw of Minneapolis, with the 1966 Norman A. Welch Memorial Award for the year's "most scholarly and meritorious contribution to the literature of medical economics." Dr. Magraw, a professor in the departments of medicine and psychiatry at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine, was co-author of the book's chapter on automation in medicine with Daniel B. Magraw, a lecturer in accounting and public administration at the University of Minnesota.

Drifted or Driven?

INFINITELY SLOW movement of the earth's crust over vast periods of time has become a doctrine of geological faith laid down by the great prophets of the profession, the "Establishment," if you will [SR, Sept. 2]. If we are to practice the true scientific method we must study the physical features and facts of the solar family and determine what known forces in this family could have produced the physical features of the earth and the evidence of continental drift. Was it sudden or slow?

It is of some interest to note that the Chinese legend of the Deluge is the only one of many that records the sudden movement of the earth's crust so that the sun, moon, and stars appeared to change their positions relative to the horizon. According to the translation of Sir William Jones, the Chinese legend runs as follows:

"The pillars of heaven were broken; the earth shook to its very foundations; the heavens sank toward the north; the sun, the moon, and the stars changed their motions; the earth fell to pieces and the waters inclosed within the bosom burst forth with violence and overflowed it."

The reference to the heavens sinking toward the north may be very significant.

Imagine yourself on a mountain top in central China when suddenly the stars sink below the northern horizon and the moon changes position in the sky. The earth shakes violently and great masses of water rush up into the interior valleys. Nothing is said of rainfall as in the Biblical Deluge but the legend does go on to tell of the Chinese Hercules who scooped out the trenches through the mountains so that the waters could return to the sea. His name was Yau.

The modern legend of convection currents and slow motion continental drift needs only a modern Hercules to make the legend complete.

ALLEN KELLY.

Carlsbad, Calif.

Science Beyond Vietnam

INTERSTELLAR COMMUNICATION should be included in the list of possible post-Vietnam scientific projects [SR, July 1, Aug. 5]. Your magazine has taken the lead in the past by publishing articles by well known scientists such as Fred Hoyle [SR, Nov. 7, 1964] regarding the possible existence of intelligent life in deep space and the feasibility of establishing communication. Interstellar communication research holds the stimulating intellectual possibility of our eventually receiving new knowledge which could greatly advance our material welfare, make possible more leisure, and enrich the quality of daily life. Frank Drake has estimated the dimensions of the task:

"Analyses show that a reasonable search, with high probability of success, might be conducted in about thirty years. The undertaking would require a large telescope, say of the order of 300 feet in diameter, a battery of sensitive multichannel radio receivers, and a large computer installation. The capital investment involved would amount