

SOVIET

RUSSIA

An Introduction

Kathleen Gibberd

REVISED EDITION

***Institute of International
Affairs***

V58.N4

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spite the large number of books and pamphlets on Soviet Russia which have been published since her entry into the war, the demand for information continues unabated. A paper-bound booklet was published from Chatham House in February 1942, but after five impressions, totalling 26,000 copies, could not be put in print owing to shortage of paper. It is now re-issued in book form, with a number of new sections and with a new chapter on Soviet Foreign Relations.

Of the original edition, the *Manchester Guardian* said:

With well-chosen facts, balanced judgement and a style simple, yet not unenlivened, *Soviet Russia* is a wholly admirable introduction. In describing the history, Constitution, and economic life of Soviet Russia it faces our ally's social achievement without the horror shown by the one sort of extremist or the adulation poured out by the other. And of how many books on Russia can this be said?

and the *Spectator*:

. . . It contains no opinions, or next to none, but, what is much better, unvarnished facts on the basis of which the intelligent reader can form opinions of his own.

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SOVIET RUSSIA
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**THE ROYAL INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**
London: Chatham House, St James's Square, S.W.1.
New York: 542 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N.Y.

Toronto Bombay
Melbourne Cape Town
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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by

KATHLEEN GIBBERD

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LONDON & NEW YORK
Royal Institute
of International Affairs

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First published February 1942

Reprinted April 1942

Reprinted June 1942

Reprinted October 1942

Reprinted March 1943

Revised edition 1946

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
AT THE BROADWATER PRESS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY
HERTFORDSHIRE

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PREFACE

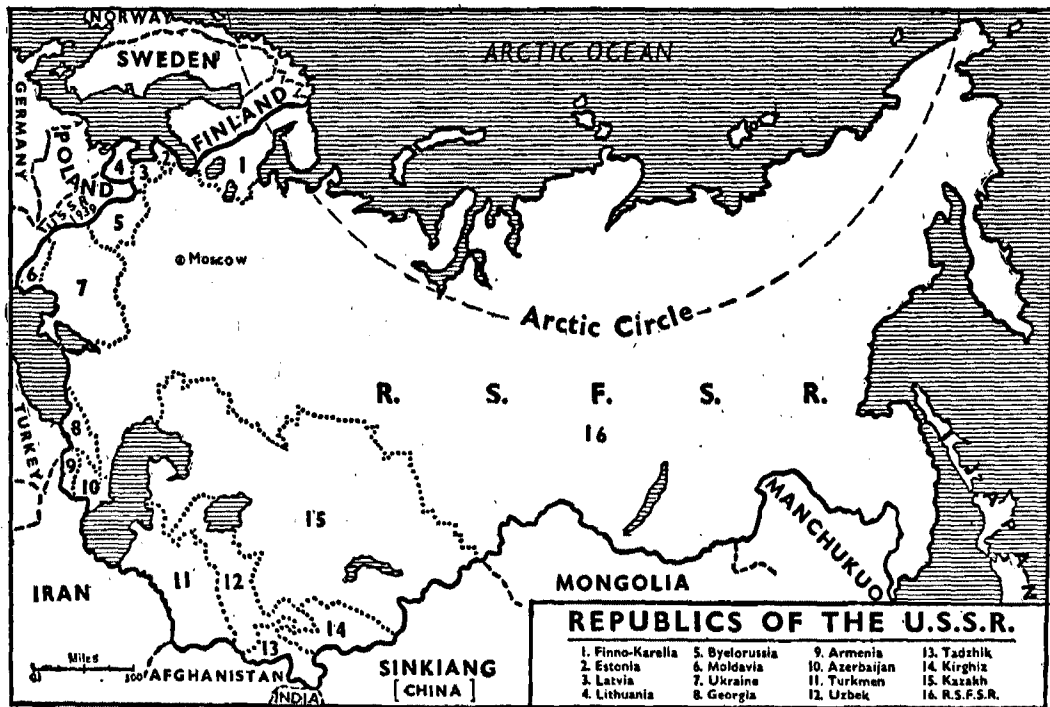
MR H. G. WELLS, when he visited Moscow in 1920, referred to Soviet Russia as "this dark crystal." After twenty-six years the description is still appropriate. The chaos that was visible in 1920 has long disappeared, but once the new regime emerged from civil war and began to take shape and form, a cloud of obscurity dimmed its features for the outside world. This was to some extent inevitable, since the outside world had no experience to help it recognize the significance of events that were the outcome of a new and revolutionary political doctrine. But the obscurity was also due to the entirely contradictory reports that foreign observers brought back to their own countries—and perhaps this was also inevitable as very few visited the U.S.S.R. for the idle pleasure of foreign travel and nearly all took with them either a predisposition to admire or an instinctive distrust. Yet again, there was a certain withdrawal from the rest of the world on the part of Russia herself. Soviet citizens were mostly debarred from travel abroad and knew little about conditions beyond their frontiers, while the Soviet Government was unwilling to allow any foreigner investigations in the interior of the country. The lack of accurate information as between the U.S.S.R. and other countries was thus mutual.

This book was originally undertaken at the request of lecturers engaged in Army education, and is therefore primarily intended for men and women who wish to know something of the internal conditions of a country that has become so powerful an ally. In the four years that have passed since the first edition, a great deal of information about the U.S.S.R. has been disseminated in this country. As a result it has been possible to establish as facts certain things which

were there set down as probabilities. Four years have also changed the perspective and made it advisable to omit some passages as no longer relevant. Although the war itself still remains outside the compass of this book, it has been necessary to add some changes of a permanent nature that have been introduced into the Soviet regime during the war years. Also, the section on the Red Army has been expanded and a new chapter has been added summarizing Soviet foreign relations in Europe before the war and Soviet foreign relations in general down to the San Francisco Conference.

There are necessarily some important omissions. It was not possible, for instance, within so small a compass to do justice either to the range of Soviet scientific research, or to the vitality of the arts in present-day Russia and their widespread appreciation among the people. While, however, the picture is necessarily incomplete, every effort has been made to arrive at accuracy.

K. G.



THE REPUBLICS OF THE U.S.S.R.