

THE ORDEAL OF
A DIPLOMAT

CONSTANTIN NABOKOFF

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BY
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P R E F A C E

THE story of my four years' tenure of office at the Russian Embassy in London, first as Counsellor of the Embassy (December 15, 1915-January 12, 1917) and later as Chargé d'Affaires, is written in the shape of personal recollections. Some episodes are corroborated by documents. The Bolsheviks have published the entire correspondence of the Russian Diplomatic Representatives. This publication naturally provoked intense indignation abroad. Trotsky has paid me the compliment of issuing a collection of my reports from India in a special pamphlet. Personally, I have no reason to complain of this iniquity. My reports from India present but a remote historical interest, as they relate to a period which has passed for ever. They denote, however, my sincere admiration for the achievement of the British Raj in India and my conviction that Great Britain and Russia should work hand in hand in the East for their mutual benefit as well as in the interests of the peoples of Asia. As regards my tele-

grams from London, the secrets therein contained were only temporary secrets. The gist of all my reports was the unshaken faith in the future of Anglo-Russian friendship, which I still retain in spite of all that has happened.

I do not believe in the wisdom of writing several hundreds of pages of memoirs. Even great men, in my opinion, make a mistake in writing too much. Whatever interest attaches to these pages is due to the fact that unkind fate had placed me in a prominent position during the greatest crisis in history. The reader may accuse me of speaking too often in the first person. It is, however, the inherent feature of all personal recollections. Since the Bolsheviks have published the diplomatic correspondence of Russian representatives, I do not consider it an indiscretion to reproduce some of these documents. I have also quoted a few letters and telegrams sent to Omsk from the Embassy. They are likewise but temporary secrets, and it is my firm belief that to withhold their publication is to deprive the public of the best means of forming a judgment on the activities of a diplomat.

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