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Alexander Gumberg and Soviet-American Relations: 1917–1933

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James K. Libbey

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PREFACE



FROM THE AMERICAN viewpoint, the tragedy of Soviet-American relations may very well be not the tension that has existed between the United States and the Soviet Union but the use of polemics by overzealous historians. The 1917–1933 period, when relations seemed less important than they have been since America's entry into the Second World War, has lent itself quite easily to ideologues who have used the cold war as a springboard for a study of relations between the two nations. The result has been a distortion of the record by an emphasis on three American decisions: refusal to recognize Soviet Russia in 1917, intervention in 1918, and recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933. Scholars and dilettantes have focused upon these events to show America's attitude toward socialism, the influence American intervention had on the direction of the Russian Revolution, and the advantages or disadvantages realized by the United States in establishing diplomatic relations with the USSR.

The present study is undertaken to improve the historical perspective of Soviet-American relations in the period 1917–1933 through a recounting of the life of Alexander Gumberg. Without any desire or compulsion to reform the world, Gumberg strove to improve the climate of opinion between Russians and Americans. He did not desire to Americanize Russia or to Bolshevize America. In this characteristic he was unusual among those who sought to influence Soviet-American relations. He firmly believed that closer ties between the two countries would redound to their mutual

benefit by assisting in the stabilization of international affairs and ensuring world peace. Of the three individuals most frequently mentioned as seeking to better Soviet-American relations in the 1920s—Raymond Robins, Senator William E. Borah, and Gumberg—only Gumberg devoted his life to this project. He influenced nearly all the principal events shared by America and Russia when official relations did not exist.

A Russian émigré, Gumberg formed the key friendship of his life when he returned to his native land in 1917. He became an adviser, translator, and confidant to Raymond Robins, at first a major and then a colonel in charge of the American Red Cross in Russia. Through Robins, Gumberg gained entrance into the political and financial leadership which exercised some influence over relations between the United States and Russia: William Boyce Thompson, Reeve Schley, Thomas Thacher, Dwight Morrow, Governor James Goodrich, and Senator Borah. Gumberg's associations with Wall Street and the hierarchy of the Republican party enabled him to exert his own subtle but persistent influence for improved relations. This influence existed on several and frequently interrelated levels: public relations, politics, and business.

Despite requests for speaking engagements, Gumberg shied away from the public forum. He preferred that others speak and write about Russia while he gave encouragement and advice and remained in the background. He did, however, become a general clearinghouse for articles and books on Russia. Gumberg's personal knowledge and his large collections of primary materials on Russia made him an invaluable source for many prominent authors, including Upton Sinclair and Edward A. Ross. On intimate terms with Gumberg, the editorial staffs of both the *Nation* and the *New Republic* often sought his assistance with manuscripts on Russia; so did such institutions as the Foreign Policy Association.

The least productive and most frustrating of Gumberg's efforts was his attempt to persuade the several Republican administrations to recognize the Soviet government. Throughout the 1920s, Gumberg acted as a one-man lobbyist. He provided material and advice to those, particularly Robins and Borah, who kept the recognition issue alive in the political arena. Many congressmen and

senators called on him for expert counsel or to use his Russian connections. Many constituents of these same politicians had their questions and problems solved by Gumberg. His important political friendships notwithstanding, Gumberg made no significant contribution to the actual negotiations leading to recognition in 1933. The close ties he formed with Republicans separated him from that Democratic administration which finally achieved reconciliation with Russia.

The most successful of Gumberg's endeavors occurred within the business community. Gumberg reorganized the cotton export trade with Russia as the American manager, 1923–1926, of the All-Russian Textile Syndicate. He served as the personal adviser to Reeve Schley, vice president of Chase National Bank, and their combined force enabled them to reinvigorate the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce in 1926. As a director of the chamber, Gumberg became the driving force behind the organization which sought to increase American business interest in Russian trade. His daily consultations with America's financial and industrial leaders established a more sympathetic body of opinion in regard to the Soviet experiment.

Finally, Gumberg, a naturalized American citizen, retained close ties with the Soviet peoples and their leaders. His brother Veniamin remained in Russia to become vice president of the Chemical Syndicate. For a while Gumberg represented the Petrograd Telegraph Agency, the precursor to TASS, in America. He also worked for Alexander A. Yazikov, chairman of the Special Trade Delegation of the Far Eastern Republic. Later he aided Boris E. Skvirsky and the Russian (later, Soviet Union) Information Bureau. Gumberg helped sponsor the visits of numerous Russian dignitaries to the United States and he assisted in cultural exchanges, such as the visit of the Russian author Boris Pilnyak. Thus he attempted to improve Soviet Russia's knowledge and understanding of the United States as well as America's comprehension of Russia. That responsible individuals in both countries valued Gumberg's lifelong efforts can be illustrated in the period following recognition when he frequently exchanged visits with the Soviet ambassador and briefed the American ambassador to the USSR.

Gumberg did not seek to start a revolution, to change the world, or to alter the morality of man. He did quietly contribute to a better understanding between the country of his birth and the country of his livelihood. He became a conveyor belt, a link between the future superpowers when their normal ties had been broken. Gumberg facilitated unofficial relations between the United States and the USSR at a time when their governments lacked official means of communication.

Although no one else can accept responsibility for my conclusions, my study of Alexander Gumberg has been blessed with the aid of many individuals and institutions. The University of Kentucky provided, through travel grants and a Dissertation Fellowship, some of the money and time I required to accomplish the necessary research. My wife, Joyce, read the manuscript in draft form. It is my good fortune to possess such a patient, but persistent, critic. Those scholars who joined her in this thankless, and sometimes dreary, task included Gene Forderhase, Eastern Kentucky University; John Gaddis, Ohio University; and Mary Wilma Hargreaves, George Herring, Richard Lowitt, Robert Warth, University of Kentucky. Professor Herring consistently provided encouragement and generously shared his intense knowledge of diplomatic history.

Many other members of the history profession gave their time, expertise, and thought to answering questions, providing valuable information, or making cogent suggestions about the direction of my research. Following an excellent diplomatic precedent, these scholars will be mentioned in a scrupulously alphabetical listing: William Berge, Eastern Kentucky University; Robert F. Byrnes, Russian and East European Institute, Indiana University; William Chambliss, University of Kentucky; Nelson Dawson, Kentucky; Nancy Forderhase, Eastern Kentucky University; George F. Kennan, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University; Ivan Krasnov, Institute of General History of the Academy of Science of the USSR; Robert Myers, Illinois; George Robinson, Eastern Kentucky University; Neil Salzman, New York; William A. Williams, Oregon State University.

In the course of my research I had the pleasure of corresponding with, or interviewing, many individuals who either knew Gumberg or possessed information about him, his activities, or his acquaintances. There is little value in discussing the relative merit of each contribution. My grateful appreciation is extended to all those who took the time to answer my inquiries. The text bears witness to the usefulness of their information.

The bulk of the research occurred in manuscript collections held by several libraries. I would like to thank the institutions and a few of the individuals who so ably gave their aid. Without exception, the following eased and made pleasant the pursuit of my research: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Josephine L. Harper, Reference Curator, assisted by Kay Thompson and a graduate assistant, Susan B. Davis; The Law Library of the University of Kentucky, Paul Willis, then Director, and a graduate assistant, Laura Kostyo; University of Virginia Library, Edmund Berkeley, Jr., Curator of Manuscripts; Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, Thomas T. Thalken, Director; The Lilly Library, Elfrieda Lang, Curator of Manuscripts, and an assistant, Wilma Etnier; The University of Chicago Library, Mary Janzen, Manuscript Research Specialist; Oral History Project, Columbia University, Louis M. Starr, Director; Columbia University Libraries, Kenneth A. Lohf, Librarian for Rare Books and Manuscripts; Yale University Library, Judith A. Schiff, Chief Research Archivist; The University Library, University of California at Los Angeles, Saundra Taylor, Historical Manuscripts Librarian; Indiana State Library, John Selch of the Manuscript Division and Martha Wright of the Indiana Division; DePauw University Library, David J. Olson, Archivist, and an assistant, Virginia Brann; New York Public Library, Robert W. Hill, Chief of the Manuscript Division, and an assistant, John Stinson; Swarthmore Peace Collection, Bernice Nichols, Curator, assisted by Nina Wolls and Sylvia Haviland; National Headquarters of the American Red Cross, Lillian C. Kidwell, Head Librarian, Irma Lucas, Archivist; National Archives, Milton Gustafson, Curator of Diplomatic Records Group, Jerry N. Hess of the Industrial and Social Branch, and William F. Sherman of the Legislative, Judicial, and Fiscal Branch; The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, J. C. James,

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INTRODUCTION



A WEEK AFTER Czar Nicholas II abdicated in 1917, the Winter Palace received a visit from the American ambassador. Prince George Lvov, premier of the new Provisional government, welcomed his guest and received the official news that the United States would be the first major power to recognize the new government. In the hectic March days the sixty-seven-year-old ambassador, David R. Francis, had frequent conversations with Michael Rodzyanko, former president of the State Duma and an important figure in the committee of Duma representatives who secured the czar's abdication and selected members of the Provisional government. When that government emerged from the committee's efforts, Francis had an extended interview with the recently named minister of foreign affairs, Paul Milyukov. The meeting between the minister and ambassador on March 18 convinced Francis that Romanov rule had forever ended. While he recognized the final collapse of autocracy, he based his evaluation of the ultimate success of the new government on two fallacies. Francis cabled Secretary of State Robert Lansing shortly after his audience with Milyukov that the successor regime would be able to prosecute the war more vigorously than ever before and that the new government embodied that principle of government most cherished by the American people—rule by consent of the governed.¹

Who could fault the forthright ambassador for accepting appearances and for making a false analogy between Russia and his own country? Francis had served as ambassador for nearly a year

prior to the outbreak of revolution. He had been in Petrograd long enough to note the gross inefficiency of the czarist regime in waging war. He noted, too, the street rumors blaming Russian reverses on the czar's wife, who, according to popular tales, worked as an agent for Germany. Francis, however, was unaware that the Russian army was a peasant army, one which by 1917 fought, when it fought at all, to protect hearth and home. The ambassador failed to comprehend that Russia's army needed a reason to fight a ghastly war. A more efficient, Western-style administration to replace the moribund autocracy did not automatically give the Russian soldier a reason to die.

A former grain dealer, mayor of Saint Louis, governor of Missouri, and secretary of the interior in the second administration of President Grover Cleveland, Francis knew much about wheat, border-state politics, and the Democratic party. He did not know Russian history. Staying close to the plush ambassadorial residence on Furshtatskaya Street, Francis accepted the Provisional government as essentially representative of the Russian people. Had he been a better student of Russian affairs he might have recognized the Provisional government as a minority authority removed from the people and their popularly elected institutions, the Soviets.

Many scholars have commented on the qualifications of Francis as ambassador, but few have praised him. The uniformly negative evaluation distorts the historical record. Of all the political misfits which the United States willed upon the Russian people as American ambassador, Francis stood higher than most as a man eminently qualified for the post in 1916.² He had been sent in April of that year for one purpose: to secure a trade treaty. His experience in commercial ventures and political ties with the Democratic party and Wilson administration provided him the expertise and connections to fulfill his task.

Francis did not complete the mandate of his office, but this failure had little to do with his qualifications to renew commercial ties between the United States and Imperial Russia. The war, Nicholas's bitterness over American complaints against his rule, and the changes of personnel in the ministry of foreign affairs due to the less-than-statesmanlike influence of Rasputin on the em-

press led to delay after delay until the Romanov dynasty ruled no more. By the spring of 1917 the requirements of American-Russian relations had altered just as dramatically as the overthrow of the monarchy had altered the Russian government. Not commerce but the prospect of American entry into the First World War became the pervasive influence in the American view of Russia.

On April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war with Germany.³ Because the United States was unwilling to become a full-fledged ally and was unable to make an immediate contribution of armed men, the government did what American private financiers had been doing for a considerable period—it lent the Entente Powers the funds to do its fighting. Immediately after Wilson requested war, Francis informed the Provisional government that the United States would extend \$100 million in credits to assist Russia. By October 1917 the commitment of America reached a total of \$325 million in credits, of which over \$187 million had been used by the Russian government.⁴

It required so little sagacity on the part of the United States government to note the tenuous existence of the Lvov and, later, Kerensky regimes that these financial arrangements appear most unusual, even foolhardy, except in the context of war. The United States provided assistance to an unconstitutional government, responsible to neither the people nor to a national assembly and one which, as indicated by its very name, Provisional, would be replaced in the near future by a different government whose policy toward war could not safely be predicted. Indeed it may be stated that the real support for the Lvov-Kerensky regimes existed outside of Russia. For the next several months the Provisional government survived only because it could walk a tightrope between pleasing its allies with a strong prowar stance and appearing to be striving toward peace, the overwhelming desire of the people as expressed in the Soviets.

Besides credits, the Wilson administration tried to bolster the lagging spirit of the Provisional government through words and deeds. On May 22, 1917, Wilson sent the Lvov regime a note reiterating his earlier thoughts to Congress that war and liberty had become synonymous.⁵ A month later, an advisory commission of railway experts arrived in Russia under the direction of John F.

Stevens, world-renowned American engineer who had supervised the completion of the Panama Canal. Events overtook the experts before they could produce effective results for the Provisional government.⁶ Concurrent with the arrival of the Stevens group, Russia received the so-called Root Mission.

It is not entirely clear whether the Root Mission accomplished anything. At seventy-three years of age, Elihu Root led a high-powered group of Americans to register the sympathies and support of the United States for Russia in revolution, but especially for Russia in war.⁷ The American guests stayed at the Winter Palace to be wined and dined and awed by the splendors of czarist Russia without achieving any idea of what direction the revolution had taken. Except for Minister of War Alexander Kerensky, who was at the Eastern Front exhorting the troops to engage in a final and disastrous offensive against the Central Powers, the responsible members of the Provisional government succeeded in convincing their American guests of their incompetence but not necessarily their impotence in carrying out the impossible task of governing a country bordering on anarchy. Only one member of this Special Diplomatic Mission, Charles Edward Russell, made a determined effort to break away from established protocols to locate the genuine sources of democracy and power in Russia.⁸

After the Root Mission left Petrograd on July 9 it recommended that the United States fund a large propaganda organization in Russia to influence public opinion toward the efficacy of war. Scholars critical of the Root Mission have grudgingly admitted the political acumen of the Special Diplomatic Mission for reaching such a conclusion. However, a ready-made case study of the effect of propaganda on the war spirit of Russian soldiers existed in the abortive July offensive begun a week before the mission's departure. For a considerable period of time prior to the commencement of the offensive, the Provisional government, and particularly its minister of war, made a strenuous effort to plead, argue, cajole, exhort, and otherwise shame the Russian army into activity by attempting to resurrect its patriotic spirit. That this great exertion ended in dismal failure should have indicated to the Root Mission and the Wilson administration the futility of attempting to influence Russian behavior by persuasion. The disorganization of

the Russian army and society had reached a stage beyond which words could alter the situation.

Although the Root Mission's specific proposals concerning propaganda did not receive the full support of the Wilson administration, measures had already been taken in April 1917 that would lead to the establishment of an American public information program in Russia. On April 14 President Wilson issued an executive order creating a Committee on Public Information composed of representatives of the secretaries of state, war, and navy and chaired by journalist George Creel. The committee's purview included domestic propaganda and censorship, but it would also administer a program of information in neutral and Allied countries. Less than a month after Wilson established the committee, Creel asked the president to send Arthur Bullard to Petrograd as the committee's representative. A graduate of Hamilton College, Bullard had spent five years in Russia as a journalist and had witnessed the 1905 Revolution. Creel thought Bullard could be attached to the Special Diplomatic Mission; however, another correspondent had already been assigned. Apparently Root disliked Bullard's political views, and Creel's suggestion proved abortive. Bullard subsequently went to Russia as a private citizen but became part of the committee after the Bolshevik insurrection. Not until late October did Wilson approve the assignment of Edgar Sisson as Petrograd agent for the committee. The choice of Sisson for the post reflected the concern and importance Russia's situation, and the deterioration of the Eastern Front, held for the United States government. Sisson formerly had been an editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and since May 1917, associate chairman of the committee. Between the time Wilson appointed Sisson and the time he arrived at his post, the Provisional government ceased to exist. The Root Mission envisioned an expenditure of over \$5 million to bolster through propaganda the Provisional government and the morale of the Russian people. Ultimately the Committee on Public Information spent less than \$2 million in sixteen countries. Thus the propaganda campaign in Russia received thousands, not millions, of dollars and then only after the downfall of the prowar government.⁹

The Provisional government sent its own mission to the

United States, led by the assistant minister of commerce, Boris Bakhmetev. Early in July, Bakhmetev acquired the post of Russia's ambassador to the United States, a position that he would hold long after the government which sent him had ceased to exist.¹⁰ The new ambassador gave substantial support to the fallacy that his government could rule Russia and carry on the war. Thus the governments of the United States and Russia assured each other of the viability of the Provisional government in a setting of mutual admiration which bore little resemblance to actual conditions. Partnership in war had prompted America to recognize the Provisional government, to assist that government financially, to send various missions providing support, and to establish belatedly a Petrograd office for propaganda. Finally, the Wilson administration enlisted the services of private institutions, including the American Red Cross, to bolster Russia's morale and flagging war effort.

The very day, July 5, 1917, Bakhmetev assumed his duties as Russian ambassador to the United States, the *Empress of Asia*, carrying among other passengers an American Red Cross Commission, sailed from Seattle for Vladivostok. The War Council of the Red Cross had conceived this operation at its third meeting held at the end of May.¹¹ In less than a month over twenty men had been selected for the commission. Led by Frank Billings, a Chicago physician, the commission gave every appearance of having established broad humanitarian goals: the distribution of food and medicine plus assistance with sanitation and transportation. Once inside Russia, however, the commission moved into politics—specifically support for Kerensky who had become premier. Several of the commission's scientific personnel, including Billings, departed from Russia in disgust over the turn of events.

Three circumstances prevented Billings from limiting the political involvement of the commission. First, William Boyce Thompson, a mining magnate and Wall Street parvenu, paid for the expenses of the entire operation. Although technically only the business agent for the group, Thompson provided the actual leadership of the commission and set the tone for the members' participation in Russian politics. Second, Red Cross officials during the war became part of the United States military. They received military ranks and were subject to military orders. Not surprisingly, a

close relationship developed between the Red Cross and the American Military Mission in Petrograd, commanded by Brigadier General William V. Judson. Accompanying the Root Mission, Judson remained in Petrograd as military attaché. The Military Mission, extremely interested in gathering intelligence, laid the groundwork for the political direction of the Red Cross. Third, unlike Billings, Thompson received what appeared to be direct instructions from the Wilson administration through the offices of Edward N. Hurley, a member of the War Council, to do everything possible to help the Kerensky regime bring order to Russia so that once again the Eastern Front might challenge the Central Powers.¹²

Thompson's commanding position did not overshadow the most interesting personality in the Red Cross group, Raymond Robins. A powerhouse orator and Bull Moose Republican, Robins had been the personal selection of Theodore Roosevelt, whose advice the War Council had solicited in determining the composition of the commission to Russia.¹³ At first, Robins did not get along with Thompson. His dark hair, penetrating eyes, swarthy complexion, vigor, and intensity sharply contrasted with the quiet, inarticulate, balding, and rotund Thompson who resembled an overly serious and somewhat lethargic cherub. As a politician, informal preacher, and social worker, Robins and his progressive associates, Robert La Follette, Jane Addams, Hiram Johnson, and others had attacked the financiers Thompson epitomized. In addition, Robins had married Margaret Dreier, leader of the women's labor movement and president of the National Women's Trade Union League.

Despite these obvious differences, Robins and Thompson were remarkably alike. Both had humble beginnings, an irregular education, made fortunes from mining, and turned to philanthropy before joining the Red Cross Commission. It was these similarities which wedded unlike personalities into a team on the journey from America to Russia. In fact, their mutual regard would grow and endure.¹⁴

After a stop in Yokohama, the *Empress of Asia* berthed at Vladivostok. A representative of the Russian Red Cross, George Landau, welcomed the group and acted in the capacity of guide and interpreter for the long train ride to Petrograd. Russian Red Cross officials had done everything to assure the comfort of their

American counterparts. The Russian Red Cross provisioned nine special cars which had formerly belonged to Czar Nicholas II. For twelve days and nights the commission experienced at firsthand the extent of the Russian land mass which spread over eight million square miles of territory.

On August 7 Ambassador Francis and other members of the American colony in Petrograd met the commissioners and introduced them to their Russian home. At first the commission resided at the Hotel de France, a dilapidated and lice-ridden institution. After a week Thompson, acting as business agent, secured with his own funds a suite of rooms at the Hotel d'Europe, one of Petrograd's finest. The luxurious hotel became the permanent headquarters for the American Red Cross and an oasis containing food and drink for Americans who suffered from the general scarcity of goods in the revolutionary-torn capital.¹⁵

Within three days of the commission's arrival important meetings were held in Petrograd and Washington, D.C., concerning aid to Russia. In the American capital President Wilson and his secretary of state welcomed home the Root Mission. Its members underscored the need for an expensive and extensive propaganda campaign to lift the spirit of Russian soldiers and the sagging will of the Provisional government. The president, urged to move in this direction by his ambassador to Russia and also by his close adviser, Colonel Edward M. House, as well as Creel, did not act with the dispatch required by the fast-moving pace of events. In contrast to the dilatory approach of the president, Thompson and the Red Cross Commission jumped at the first opportunity to demonstrate political interest and material support for the Kerensky regime. On August 10 Thompson, Robins, and Francis met with Premier Kerensky and his foreign minister, Michael Tereshchenko. At a dinner presided over by Francis within the American embassy, Thompson established a close rapport with the Russian premier. The magnate produced a telegram he proposed to send to J. P. Morgan & Company. Not only did Thompson request an immediate sum of 425,000 rubles of his own funds to purchase Russian war bonds but offered to form a syndicate to buy 10 million rubles' worth of bonds, to act as an unpaid agent, and to underwrite 10 percent of the syndicate's purchase.¹⁶ Thompson assumed

that Russia had been saved by her revolution and the revolutionary spirit could be turned into a crusade to expel the Central Powers from Russian soil to the benefit of America's war policy.

Almost as an afterthought, President Wilson approved the dispatch of a Committee on Public Information agent to Russia some two and a half months after his talks with members of the Root Mission. Thompson, in a matter of weeks, helped form a propaganda machine by working through the Provisional government and the moderate socialists associated with Kerensky. A Committee on Civic Education in Free Russia was created as a Provisional government propaganda agency financed by a million dollars from Thompson. Catherine Breshkovskaya, a longtime anti-tsarist revolutionary, became the titular head of the committee which also included Kerensky's private secretary David Soskice and General Constantine Neslukovsky, a member of the Russian General Staff who took charge of army propaganda. The initial sum put forward by Thompson permitted the Committee on Civic Education in Free Russia to purchase a printing plant, create soldiers' clubs that would exhibit propaganda and sponsor prowar speakers, establish news bureaus, and form a chain of a hundred newspapers. This impressive information project had one goal: to stamp upon the Russian mind the idea that the revolution could be saved only by fighting the Central Powers. Until the arrival of Thompson, most Allied propaganda had been designed to boast of the invincibility and material resources possessed by the democracies. Such propaganda succeeded in convincing Russians that victory could be achieved without any assistance from war-weary Russians.¹⁷

The committee's work proved tardy in changing existing opinion. When Charles Edward Russell returned with the Root Mission he told President Wilson: "The trouble is that at present the average Russian sees nothing in the war that appeals to the soul in him. The war was made by the Czar; that mere fact prejudices the average Russian against it." Even those Americans directly involved in the committee's campaign could see that it was too late. After addressing a Russian machine-gun unit, Robins confided to his diary that the "war is dead in the heart [*sic*] of men."¹⁸

The elaborate propaganda machine fashioned by the Commit-

tee on Civic Education in Free Russia required large amounts of money. Thompson's million-dollar grant proved insufficient and the magnate began to bombard the Wilson administration with requests for additional money. Thompson pleaded with the State Department for an allocation of \$3 million a month. He even encouraged Breshkovskaya to send a direct communication to President Wilson begging for additional assistance. Finally, Thompson enlisted his Wall Street associates in the campaign. Creel arranged an appointment with President Wilson for H. Grosvenor Hutchins, first vice president of the National Bank of Commerce, who interceded on behalf of the Thompson group. The meeting between Wilson and Hutchins resulted in Wilson's sending a letter to Thompson commending him for his patriotism. The previous day Wilson talked with Edgar Sisson who then prepared for his journey to Russia. The initial allocation for Russian propaganda was a paltry quarter of a million dollars instead of the millions sought by Thompson. Furthermore, Wilson's instructions to Sisson, written the day Hutchins had his audience with the president, implied that Sisson must avoid the "meddling" in politics evidenced by the alliance of Red Cross Commission and Provisional government.¹⁹

While Thompson engaged in political activity the Red Cross Commission ministered to the very real needs and sufferings of the Russian people. The members of the Red Cross assisted in war relief, in work with refugees, and in care for the wives and families of soldiers in the vain hope of stimulating the army to fight. Robins received the most difficult and demanding task. A member of a four-man committee appointed to deal with civilian needs in Russia's two great metropolitan areas, he made frequent trips to the countryside to organize and transport food supplies for Moscow and Petrograd. In the provinces and districts Robins visited, he discovered that grain and transportation could be secured only by working through the local Soviets rather than the officials of the Provisional government. After one of these food-searching trips to the Ekaterinoslav Province early in September, Robins entered Petrograd in the midst of a counterrevolution. A rift had occurred, due to confused communications between Premier Kerensky and his commander-in-chief, General Lavr Kornilov. After the general refused Kerensky's demand for a resignation, Kornilov mobilized his

forces in a desperate and futile attempt to crush the Petrograd Soviet and reorganize the Provisional government. His movement faltered in the unsteady allegiance of his own troops and the swift and vigorous resistance organized by the Petrograd Soviet. The whole episode revealed to Thompson and Robins the Provisional government's weakness and propelled the Bolshevik party to new heights of prestige and power.²⁰

Frustrated by the lack of support rendered by the Wilson administration, discouraged by the evident weakness of the Provisional government following the Kornilov putsch, and convinced of the efficacy of the Soviets, Thompson and Robins took a drastic step early in November 1917. Thompson gathered together the military attachés for Britain, France, and the United States. Generals Alfred Knox, Henri Niessel, and Judson joined Kerensky's secretary, Soskice, and attaché General Neslukovsky in a conference designed to save the Provisional government by an alliance with the Soviets. The talks degenerated into a name-calling session. With the exception of the Americans, the Allied generals expressed in overly blunt terms their disappointment in the Kerensky regime. These attachés, along with their civilian diplomatic counterparts, had actively supported the Kornilov revolt, and the only positive program they could suggest was a military dictatorship. Like the United States, Britain and France focused their attention on Russia only as a wartime ally in the struggle with Germany. Humiliated by the derogatory comments of Knox and Niessel, General Neslukovsky abruptly left the Hotel d'Europe.²¹ Three days later Leon Trotsky secured the Peter and Paul Fortress for the Soviets and two days after that the Second All-Russian Soviet pronounced the end of the Provisional government.

Out of the maelstrom of revolution the figure of a New York businessman, Alexander Gumberg, emerged to play a key role in the unofficial relations that existed between Soviet Russia and the United States from November 1917 to November 1933. A Russian-American, Gumberg returned to his homeland in late spring 1917 as a sales representative for several American firms. His ability as a translator, however, quickly led him into a different direction. The Root Mission employed his services, as did numerous

American correspondents, so that by October he quit his business connections to devote his full time to translating Russian periodicals for journalists.²² Because he had many Bolshevik acquaintances and had easy access to the Bolshevik headquarters in the Smolny Institute, Gumberg's importance to Petrograd's American colony grew in proportion to the radicalization of Russia's Revolution.

During September and October, Robins employed several translators, principally Sarah Kropotkin, daughter of the philosophical anarchist Prince Peter Kropotkin, to gather Russian opinion from periodicals.²³ He kept himself and Thompson abreast of the Russian view of the United States. From time to time Robins also informally employed members of the American community, such as journalists Bessie Beatty, Albert Rhys Williams, John Reed, and Louise Bryant, who had inside information on political affairs. Robins held long conversations with these members of the American colony as well as with Bullard and the Associated Press representative, Charles Smith. Gumberg did occasional assignments for all these individuals and frequently joined his companions in their talks with Robins at the Hotel d'Europe. Out of these discussions grew Robins's appreciation of and close friendship with Gumberg. Robins would later recall that Gumberg consistently had the most prescient information about Russian affairs.²⁴

The impact of the November 7 Bolshevik insurrection would directly affect not only the diplomatic ties of the United States with Russia but the personal lives of Gumberg, Robins, and Thompson. Unlike the situation in March, Francis, closely aligned with the defunct government, recommended nonrecognition of the new Soviet government because of its avowed intention to withdraw Russia from the war. In the immediate context of the chaos prevailing in Russia, the United States had little choice but to wait and see what effect the events in Petrograd would have on the remainder of Russia. As time wore on, however, the formula of nonrecognition became a program and then a hardened policy, curiously, in direct proportion to the increasing ability of the Soviet government to assert control over Russia's political life. Guided by humanitarian and patriotic motives, Thompson and Robins always worked with whatever institutions they could use in Russia to further the war

effort and ameliorate the distress war and revolution brought to the Russian people. Their goals did not change because of the new political life in Petrograd, but their personal role in Soviet Russia changed dramatically.

Thompson had given much of his own energy and financial resources to helping the revolution through the Provisional government. His close ties with the ousted leadership of that government proved an insurmountable handicap. The taint of Thompson's million-dollar contribution to Kerensky was a liability recognized by both Thompson and Robins. A few weeks later, Thompson departed, leaving Robins in command of the Red Cross Commission. Robins himself needed to restructure his outlook and his staff. In his effort to seek influence with the Soviet government to continue the beneficial endeavors of the Red Cross, Robins dismissed Sarah Kropotkin, who openly opposed the Bolshevik leadership. Robins replaced his principal secretary with Gumberg, a man whose intelligence and access to the Smolny Institute he had already come to appreciate. In the aftermath of Bolshevik victory, Gumberg was to become the most important bridge linking America and Russia.

1

THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN



IN THE DARK of night on that historic day of November 7, 1917, three men and two women departed from Smolny Institute leaving behind them the smoke-filled, stale but excited air of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets. As headquarters of the Bolshevik party and the Military Revolutionary Committee, this former school for young ladies became the command center for what has been labeled the Bolshevik Revolution.¹ The cool bracing air of Petrograd's night enveloped the five comrades. They left behind the noise of couriers, soldiers, delegates, and the contemptuous voice of Leon Trotsky describing as so much garbage those who would waver at the supreme moment. New sounds greeted the five, less intense but more ominous—the occasional crack of a rifle and the distant thud of a firing cannon—sounds associated with death and violence. Sights and sounds of life, however, drew their attention. In front of Smolny vehicles moved, occasionally coughing in seeming protest to the cold and to the cargoes they carried. Several armed men stacked bundles of paper in a lorry. One of the five made inquiries and discovered that the truck would soon be driven through the city. An armed man extended an invitation to them and shortly the truck roared through the streets carrying its load of people and paper. The riders tore open the bundles and began to throw into the night air a proclamation written by Vladimir I. Ulyanov, known to all as Lenin. The proclamation began "To the Citizens of Russia! The Provisional Government is deposed."²

It was not unusual in the Petrograd of November 1917 to see a

truck careening through the streets spewing out pieces of white paper. The novelty of the situation was that of the five acquaintances only one, Alexander Gumberg, had been born in Russia. The other members of this remarkable group, John Reed, Louise Bryant, Bessie Beatty, and Albert Rhys Williams, were in Russia as American newspaper correspondents. Significant and symbolic of the life of Gumberg was his performance as an interpreter, figuratively and literally, for this group of Americans traveling through the Russian Revolution.

Born in the Ukraine in 1887, the son of an Elizavetgrad rabbi, Alexander Semenovich Gumberg emigrated alone to the United States at the age of fifteen. He shared, along with millions of persecuted Russian Jews, the vision of America's promise. While knowledge of his formative years will probably remain unknown, he obviously had been instilled with a self-sufficient spirit enabling him to make the arduous journey from Odessa to New York City.³ Despite the independence of mind revealed to all who touched his life, Gumberg provided comfort and financial aid to his family remaining in Russia. These apparently contradictory parts to his character, independence and family ties to Russia, made unique his view of the events in his homeland. He sympathized with the aspirations and progress of the Russian people but lacked an attachment to the ideology which sought to drag Russia into the twentieth century.

Of Gumberg's brothers and sister—Sergei, Veniamin, and Zhenya—only Sergei, who assumed the revolutionary pseudonym Zorin, briefly visited the United States. Zorin, the ardent Bolshevik in the family, did not find life in America appealing. He worked as an unskilled laborer and left the United States in 1917 with Trotsky and other Russian-American émigrés. Although never a public figure, Zorin's name and form loom up again and again as a troubleshooter within the inner circles of the Bolshevik party. This brotherly relationship would later facilitate Gumberg's movement among the Bolshevik elite even though he never joined the party. The difference between brothers may be summarized by noting that on November 7, when Gumberg observed the Revolution as a sympathetic outsider, Zorin carried a weapon and actively participated in the overthrow of the Provisional government.

Receiving a university education, Veniamin developed a taste for life and culture more in tune with that of his younger brother, Alexander. Veniamin became Gumberg's counterpart in Russia, something of a Soviet businessman. His bourgeois background would eventually overtake him in the era of Soviet Five Year Plans. His fall from position followed that of Zorin, who had the misfortune of siding with the ousted lieutenants of Trotsky when Stalin obtained supreme power. In the 1930s much of Gumberg's life centered on his efforts to aid his family in its time of stress.⁴

Understandably, some commentators on the life of Gumberg have never been able to comprehend satisfactorily the conflict inherent within his character. In *Russia Leaves the War*, George F. Kennan suggested that Gumberg confused his national allegiances when he returned to Russia in 1917. The record indicates quite the opposite. Unlike many Russian-Americans in the prewar era, Gumberg enjoyed a relatively successful life in the United States. He entered the pharmaceutical industry and, after numerous years of employment and apprenticeship with the Manhattan Drug Importing Company, became a registered pharmacist in 1908. For the next few years, he was employed as a pharmacist or as a pharmaceutical salesman, pursuing his profession from New York and New Jersey to California and later returning to New York. All his employers remarked on his honesty, integrity, and reliability. Presumably he left one employer for another in the grand, if somewhat romanticized, American tradition of independence and a search for a better life. In contrast to other Russian émigrés who remained closely attached to their own communities in New York, Cleveland, or Chicago, Gumberg had the opportunity of seeing and enjoying the United States and developing wide contacts among Americans in the business community. He gained such an astute knowledge of American commercial procedures that he became business manager of the Russian socialist paper *Novy Mir* (*The New World*), published in New York City.⁵

Gumberg resigned his position with *Novy Mir* late in 1915 but not before forming many friendships among American and Russian-American socialists. These associations enabled him to meet many of those Russian-Americans who would later play such a vital role in the Bolshevik Revolution. Not the least of these indi-

viduals, Leon Trotsky sought asylum in the United States from a French government displeased over his antiwar attitude. Trotsky briefly joined the world of Russian-America to write for *Novy Mir*.⁶

Unlike Trotsky, who immersed himself only in the America of émigrés, Gumberg pursued an American, not Russian, experience. He left pharmaceuticals to obtain a position with Perelstrous & Storms, industrial purchasing agents, in New York. There he supervised the filling of orders for gauges, jigs, and special tools. He went to Russia in 1917, not as a disenchanting Russian émigré but as an American businessman in charge of the Russian interests for Perelstrous & Storms. His firm also authorized him to sell tractors produced by Dauch Manufacturing Company, moving pictures handled by the Inter-Ocean Film Corporation, gauges furnished by the Canadian Car and Foundry Company, and lungmotors manufactured by the Life Saving Devices Company.⁷ Gumberg, a naturalized American, a purchaser of Liberty Bonds, a heavy investor in American railroad securities, and one who always directed his financial compensation from his various activities in Russia to his New York bank, never intended to renew his Russian citizenship.⁸

Gumberg's American experience differed significantly from that of many of his Russian-American acquaintances. Most had come from a far more humble Russian background. Michael Yanishev, Boris Reinstein, Bill Shatov, Moisei Goldstein, Samuel Voskov, Alexander Krasnoshchekov, and Arnold Neibut entered life as the progeny of peasants and workers. They left the political oppression of czarist Russia to enter what appeared to them to be the economic oppression of the United States. Whether they became, as Yanishev, a Boston worker or, as Neibut, a leader of the Chicago section of the American Socialist party, they maintained two characteristics: hope for the eventual overthrow of the despised Russian monarchy and a belief in the historic mission of the worker.⁹

These and other Russian-Americans typified those individuals George Kennan could understand with alacrity. Their American sojourn enhanced, rather than altered, any fundamental values and prejudices which they possessed. They saw what they wanted to see; they lived among themselves in Russian-American enclaves

where they met only like-minded members of America's radical community. Of the many Russian-Americans who reentered Russia in 1917, some found their way to the Bolshevik party and a few, such as Krasnoshchekov, president of the Far Eastern Republic, achieved positions of leadership. Gumberg, however, became the interpreter of two societies, sympathetic to both, yet accepting their basic differences. Many of his Russian-American friends could not exist in two dimensions. They interpreted, for good or evil, their American life from the Russian vantage point and subtly strengthened, as translators and members of the Bolshevik party, the antagonism of two ideologies.¹⁰

Despite the duality of Gumberg's sympathies, he had a remarkable facility and took some pride in his ability to move among diverse social circles. His short, stocky build and receding brown hair imperfectly covering a wry visage became a familiar sight among Russian-Americans, the personnel of the American embassy in Petrograd, and the Bolshevik leadership at Smolny. He could even count numerous Russian monarchists and businessmen as his friends. Shortly before the November insurrection Gumberg took Williams and Reed to the home of a Russian merchant for a social gathering of conservative Russian businessmen. Reveling in the obvious contrast between Russian monarchists and two American socialists, Gumberg quieted the correspondents' misgivings by suggesting that the event would be an excellent opportunity to view the opposition—besides there would be plenty of food, drink, and caviar, luxuries rarely enjoyed by American socialists or anyone in Petrograd in the third year of World War I. Gumberg could not have been more pleased at the meeting. When the conversation turned to politics, however, sparks began to fly as the merchants showed a preference for a German occupation of Petrograd to a Bolshevik assumption of power. Gumberg's cynical humor saved the social encounter when he called for a vote between Kaiser Wilhelm and Lenin. Lenin lost by a landslide and the Americans quickly cut short their visit.¹¹

Those who knew Gumberg have noted his intelligence, his courage, and especially his wit. His reluctant smile and utterances, though, sometimes passed from wit to sarcasm and at least one person, the volatile and thin-skinned John Reed, disliked Gum-

berg because of his indiscriminate barbs directed at both friend and foe. Eventually the two men shared a reciprocal animosity. Fundamentally unemotional, Gumberg became unnerved only by four occurrences: the unexpected death of Dwight Morrow in 1931, the arrest of his brother Veniamin in 1930, the trial and execution of Leonid P. Serebriakov in the Stalinist purge, and any time someone mentioned the name John Reed. The premature death of Reed in 1920 did not alter Gumberg's antagonism, as Granville Hicks discovered in the 1930s when he communicated at length with Gumberg for his biography of Reed. Reed will always have the last word in their feud. In his work, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, Reed immortalized his opinion of Gumberg by assigning him the pseudonym "Trusishka," which means "coward" in Russian. Gumberg, however, accompanied the commissars for war and marine when they journeyed to the battle between pro- and anti-Provisional government forces shortly after the November insurrection; these could hardly have been the activities of a "Trusishka."¹²

Although Gumberg and Reed became bitter foes, they shared the mutual friendship of Albert Rhys Williams. The son of a Congregational minister, Williams followed the calling of his father, graduating from Hartford Theological Seminary in 1907. After further studies at Cambridge and Marburg universities he returned to America as pastor of the Maverick Congregational Church in East Boston's working-class district. Williams interested himself in radical movements and later spurned his religious vocation for journalism. Sent to Russia as a correspondent for the *New York Evening Post* in June 1917, Williams met Gumberg and other Americans residing in Petrograd. Gumberg helped Williams learn Russian and smoothed his transition into the Russian milieu.

Later that summer Williams, accompanied by his new guide, visited the Ukraine and Gumberg's birthplace, Elizavetgrad. Williams's various trips to the countryside became a revelation. He would later spend considerable time studying the "dark" villages of rural Russia gleaning material for his book on the peasants, *The Russian Land*, published in 1927. Imbued with a Christian humanitarian background and an instinctive compassion for the workingman, Williams quickly saw the crux of the Russian situa-

tion. From the beginnings of recorded Russian history, the peasant believed the land belonged only to those who worked it. In the summer of 1917 the conflict between the landlords and tillers of the soil had already erupted. The weak Provisional government could not stem the tide of increasing disorders, and Williams and Gumberg witnessed more than one burned-out manor house and the forcible eviction of its occupants. When the Bolsheviki assumed power and issued a decree nationalizing the land, the party did not start a revolution in the countryside but merely accepted its outcome. The majority of the people freely and democratically, if not distastefully, decided against property. Neither the liberals of the Wilson administration nor the conservative members of the Republican regimes in the 1920s and early 1930s could accept this type of democracy. The casual regard for property which developed in town and country in Russia became a serious impediment to diplomatic relations between America and Russia.¹³

After Williams and Gumberg returned to Petrograd, Williams found himself increasingly isolated from other American correspondents, except for Bessie Beatty, who represented the *San Francisco Bulletin*. Most of the American journalists refused to accept the realities of Russian life and Williams sought comfort in the company of sympathetic British reporters, Arthur Ransome and M. Philips Price.¹⁴ Williams's feeling of isolation ended upon the arrival in September of John Reed and his wife, Louise Bryant. By 1917 Reed, a Harvard graduate, had become famous as a partisan of the International Workers of the World in the Paterson strike and as a war correspondent, first in the battles of revolutionary Mexico and then in the war in Europe where he had covered the Western Front from both sides. While in Germany, Reed committed the faux pas of taking, on a lark, a few shots at the French from the German lines. Like many American socialists, he found the war basically disgusting and hated British imperialism as much, if not more, than German imperialism. Not surprisingly his activities and beliefs made him persona non grata to the Entente Powers. When he attempted to see the Eastern Front from the Russian side, his past caught up with him and czarist officials placed him in jail. In spite of this experience, he became something of a Russophile.

Reed entered Petrograd sharing with Williams a love for Rus-

sia, sympathy for the working classes, and a similar opinion of the war. They quickly formed a close association and enjoyed the assistance of Gumberg, who helped Reed with his Russian and provided him with the contacts and information necessary to bring him up to date on the Russian situation.¹⁵ Reed appreciated Gumberg's abilities, but he and Williams developed into Bolshevik partisans and Reed could not accept Gumberg's skepticism. The sharp but still friendly banter exchanged by Reed and Gumberg ended on the day of the Bolshevik insurrection. Although both men held a profound admiration for Lenin, Gumberg's apparent objectivity drove a wedge between him and the pro-Bolshevik Reed. The events of November 7 acted as a watershed in their relationship. Thereafter a few American radicals such as Reed and many Russian-Americans, who in spirit had never left Russia, lost their identity in their total acceptance of the Russian Revolution as seen through the eyes of the Bolshevik party.

The day had begun auspiciously enough for the insurrection. In the early hours of November 7, the Kexholm and Pavlov regiments seized the Petrograd Telephone Exchange, the State Bank, and the Treasury in the name of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet. Earlier elections among Petrograd workers and soldiers had returned a Bolshevik majority to the local Soviet, which selected Leon Trotsky as its presiding officer. Most individuals, including members of Alexander Kerensky's Provisional government, realized that the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets could easily assume power once the vestiges of Kerensky's authority had been removed. By noon the Provisional government's rule extended only to the outer limits of the Winter Palace. Two questions restrained the elation of the Bolsheviks over the near bloodless "revolution." Would the Kerensky regime be able to muster sufficient military force to effect a counterstroke? When would the Winter Palace be occupied by pro-Soviet forces?¹⁶

Beatty had made a luncheon engagement with Premier Kerensky. Needless to say, the insurrection ended their plans. Beatty missed her lunch and a provocative interview with the besieged premier. Gumberg soothed Beatty's disappointment by introducing her to Trotsky, who told them of his fear that troops loyal to the Provisional government might be brought from the Eastern

Front to Petrograd to unseat the Soviets. This did not occur until five days later, when pro- and anti-Soviet forces confronted each other at Pulkovo. Only future events confirmed that the diffident "battle" of Pulkovo sealed the doom of the Provisional government. On November 7, however, the potential existence of counterrevolutionary forces contributed to the anxious moments of Soviet partisans.¹⁷

Afternoon passed into evening and the Winter Palace continued to hold out against the Soviet forces surrounding it. The opening of the Second Congress at Smolny could no longer be delayed. Dan, a Menshevik and the outgoing chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the First Congress, opened the new session. The first order of business was the election of a presidium. Allied with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks made an impressive showing. The presidium included fourteen Bolsheviks, seven Socialist Revolutionaries, and only four Mensheviks. As a result, the Bolshevik leader Leo Kamenev became the new chairman. Under the direction of Martov, the Mensheviks vilified the Bolsheviks for spearheading the attack on the Provisional government. Adhering more closely to Marxist orthodoxy, Mensheviks believed that a blow against the Provisional, or any capitalist, government should be struck only when Russia had become a fully developed capitalist society. For the most part they did not differ with the Bolsheviks as to the ultimate goal of history. To them, the Bolsheviks committed the error of bad timing; therefore, the Mensheviks would walk out of the Congress and hence out of the revolution.

Around midnight, while the Congress still debated the fate of the Provisional government, Gumberg, Williams, Reed, Bryant, and Beatty left Smolny to try to determine what was happening at the Winter Palace. The distance was nearly two miles, too far for the anxious group to walk, so Gumberg negotiated a ride in a truck which carried Lenin's proclamation. They hoped they could get off the lorry somewhere near the palace. The truck raced over the cobblestone streets, its occupants throwing copies of the proclamation in the hands of passers-by. At one pause Gumberg read the proclamation to his friends under the dim light of a nearby street lamp. The document not only informed Petrograd that the Provi-

sional government had been deposed but promised peace, the elimination of landlord property rights, labor control over industry, and the creation of a Soviet government.¹⁸

The five left the lorry near the Kazan Cathedral and walked the remainder of the way to the Winter Palace. After some difficulty in penetrating the approaches patrolled by Red Guards, their Military Revolutionary Committee passes gained them entrance to the area of the palace which had just been captured by the variety of forces assembled for that purpose. The attackers suffered six fatalities, one soldier and five sailors. None of the defenders perished. The Americans saw the various ministers being led from the palace to the Peter and Paul Fortress, which had become the temporary headquarters for the committee's operation. For want of cars the ministers endured a trek to the fortress under threatening harassment from onlookers. The real prize, Kerensky, could not be found. He had escaped, with the partial assistance of the American embassy, earlier in the day. At the moment the ministers threaded their way through lines of ugly-tempered soldiers and sailors, he sat safely in Pskov, 180 miles away, attempting to gather troops for a counterblow.¹⁹

The Americans journeyed back to Smolny and to the Second Congress, just in time to hear Kamenev announce the fall of the palace and the arrest of the various ministers. A walkout staged by the Mensheviks enabled the slightly truncated Congress to proceed with the business at hand. A resolution passed, officially deposing the Provisional government and replacing it with the Congress. The decree also transferred all power of local government to the existing countrywide system of Soviets. By five o'clock on the morning of November 8, the Congress concluded its first session by approving another resolution, pleading with the railway workers and soldiers to stop any rail traffic proceeding to Petrograd under the direction of Kerensky. Later the same day the overworked Congress held a second session creating the first Soviet government, a Council of People's Commissars chaired by Lenin, and it issued the famous decrees on peace and land.²⁰

Years later Williams recalled that after he, Reed, Bryant, Beatty, and Gumberg had witnessed the fall of the Winter Palace and the creation of the new Soviet government, it was the Russian-

American Gumberg who shrugged his shoulders and told his radical friends that it was their revolution to do with as they please, not his.²¹ Ideologically and ironically, the revolution would belong to the American journalists and not to the Russian-American. Yet, during the days that followed, the need for communications between Petrograd's American colony and Smolny Institute would push Gumberg from the periphery to the center of events as an unofficial ambassador. Gumberg may have shrugged his shoulders over the drama played out on November 7, but the Bolshevik victory would have a lasting impact on his life and on the nature of Russian-American relations.

2

AMBASSADOR WITHOUT PORTFOLIO



ALEXANDER GUMBERG'S POCKETS literally bulged with passes and letters of introduction in the aftermath of the November insurrection. While the new Soviet regime supported peace in direct contrast to the aims and desires of Russia's recent allies, Bolshevik leaders never desired to terminate all contact with the Western democracies, who uniformly declined to recognize the new state of political affairs. Forced by diplomatic ostracism to seek unofficial means of communication, the Soviet government made Gumberg its principal contact with the United States from the fall of 1917 to the spring of 1918. Among his contemporaries in Petrograd, he acquired the nickname "International Ambassador," a distinction acknowledging his role in arranging discussions between the Soviet government and the Allied countries, particularly the United States, about problems that would ordinarily have been handled through regular diplomatic channels.¹

Gumberg's credentials included writs issued by Felix Dzerzhinsky, commandant of Smolny Institute, Vyacheslav Molotov, secretary of the Military Revolutionary Committee, and Leon Trotsky, commissar of foreign affairs. These passes permitted Gumberg to gain entry into any commissariat or institution of the new government. The freedom of movement he acquired equaled that of the most prominent members of the Bolshevik party. His low, mocking, staccatolike speech became as familiar in the passageways of Smolny as the flowing verbosity of Trotsky. Although he refused to join the Bolshevik, later Communist, party, his inti-

mate relations with the hierarchy of the party emerged through his friendship with many Russian-American Bolsheviks, his considerable skill as a professional translator, his brother Zorin's active party work—Zorin would shortly leave for Rumania as a party agitator—and his close ties with many American journalists. Bolshevik leaders, including Lenin, carefully groomed numerous journalists from several countries in the expectation of receiving sympathetic press coverage on the aspirations and events surrounding the Soviet experiment. Gumberg, by acting as intermediary between Smolny and the American correspondents, had assisted the Bolsheviks before the November insurrection. He continued this function after November 7, 1917. Gumberg arranged for Reed and Williams to cover the battle of Pulkovo from the very automobile carrying the commanders of the Bolshevik forces.²

Gumberg's most important role, however, was not played in the frequently romantic world of journalism. The American Red Cross Commission required his talents and contacts. Dwindling members of the commission had to distribute thousands of cans of condensed milk and several hundred thousand dollars worth of medical supplies, while they continued overseeing the appropriate use of ambulances and other vehicles donated by the Red Cross and the American Jewish Friends of Free Russia. The lapse in American diplomatic relations with Russia did not in any way diminish the important services provided by the commission. Red Cross officials found their ranks depleted as a result of earlier controversy between the politically and scientifically oriented members. Realistically Thompson and Robins knew they had to reach a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet regime or lose all ability to aid the destitute masses and prevent the death by malnutrition of an estimated 25,000 Russian children dependent on American milk. Ignoring for the moment the lively and controversial issues raised by the Bolshevik assumption of power, Thompson authorized Robins to make contact with Smolny to secure the commission's position with the new regime. Although Robins had worked frequently with local Soviets on Red Cross matters, he and Thompson unwittingly had placed themselves in an awkward stance by their strong support of the Provisional government. Under those circumstances Robins turned for help to Gumberg, the one man he knew to have

the intelligence and discretion required to establish unofficial contacts with a government not recognized by the United States. Thus sixteen years before America acknowledged the existence of Soviet Russia, Gumberg entered Smolny Institute to make an appointment with Trotsky for Robins.³

In the first week after its formation, the Soviet government's attention, by necessity, focused on anti-Soviet movements. Trotsky did not even bother to vacate his office in Smolny or attempt to take physical charge of the premises housing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until after the government's position had been safeguarded in the conflict at Pulkovo Heights outside Petrograd. Trotsky's attitude toward his new post was impudent at best. He claimed that all he would have to do would be to preach world revolution, publish the secret treaties between czarist Russia and her Allies, and close down the ministry, then under the charge of a czarist bureaucrat Count Tatishchev.⁴

Within two weeks Trotsky made good his promise to publish the treaties. Under different circumstances the release of these documents, laying bare the Entente Powers' expansionist aims, could have been considered the first step in a new public diplomacy. President Wilson later spoke of open covenants in his Fourteen Points speech. But in the midst of war, such braggadocio exhibited a breach of faith and disdain for the traditional forms of diplomacy. By December 2, 1917, Russian delegates reached Brest-Litovsk, command post for the German Eastern Front. A combination of Bolshevik insolence, publication of the secret wartime treaties, and establishment of unilateral armistice talks with the enemy prevented Russia's former Allies from recognizing the new regime. The Bolshevik espousal of godless, economic democracy achieved by force perplexed particularly and challenged directly President Wilson's precepts: political democracy, Christian ethics, and America's mission to extend by example her unique moral, economic, and political values to the world at large. But the immediate cause for American nonrecognition lay in Wilson's view of the Soviet regime as a minority government which had seized power illegally. A concrete expression of American displeasure emerged on November 24, 1917, when Secretary of State Lansing informed Ambassador Bakhmetev that the Wilson administration

would continue to acknowledge the ambassador as Russia's, but not the Soviet government's, representative. Bakhmetev became a creature of the United States—a point of considerable importance since the ambassador controlled the remaining credits and monies extended by America to the Provisional government.⁵

When Gumberg arranged the interview for Robins, Trotsky revealed a different, more realistic understanding of his government's weak position. The war had ended for Russia. No army or martial will existed to reconstitute the Eastern Front. In those conditions the Soviet government had two alternatives: first, to work for a German revolution which would create a government sympathetic to Russia; second, in the absence of a German revolution, to reach an armistice and peace agreement with the Central Powers before European Russia came under military occupation. Under these desperate conditions Trotsky did attempt to open diplomatic relations with the Allies. He had frequent conversations with Captain Jacques Sadoul of the French Military Mission, interviewed the Belgian ambassador, and two days after the insurrection agreed to Gumberg's request to see Robins.⁶

Unfortunately, when Gumberg and Robins entered Trotsky's office, an aide recognized Robins and remembered a speech in which Robins had praised the Provisional government. Gumberg quickly intervened to explain to the commissar that Robins had come to Russia to aid the Russian people and had worked with Kerensky only because the premier presumably led the revolutionary government. Robins's translator informed Trotsky that Robins now considered the Provisional government defunct and would acknowledge Soviet authority. By drawing on Gumberg's skill and acquaintance with Trotsky, Robins concluded an understanding with Trotsky that allowed the Red Cross to continue its work in Russia. Robins then and in subsequent interviews learned that the Red Cross Commission not only could fulfill its humanitarian goals but also could play a political role which would have a direct and beneficial result for the war policies of the United States.⁷

Trotsky assured the two Americans that the commission's presence would be welcome. He also laid the groundwork for positive action which would convince Robins that the Soviet government could be trusted and was willing to work against the Central

Powers in the limited manner possible consistent with the situation confronting the Soviet leadership in November 1917. The commissar of foreign affairs promised the protection and safe transport to Petrograd of over 400,000 cans of condensed milk and medical supplies then stored in the northern White Sea ports. Under stress of reduced personnel and because of Gumberg's ability to work with Soviet institutions, Robins eventually assigned him to organize and administer the distribution of these Red Cross supplies.⁸

Surprisingly, Trotsky also permitted the transfer of thirty-two boxcars of Red Cross supplies to Rumania. The American Red Cross Commission in Rumania, led by Colonel H. W. Anderson, needed those supplies. Rumania, like the United States, joined the Allied cause late in the war. Russia's withdrawal from active participation left the beleaguered country isolated. By allowing the Rumanians to receive Red Cross materials, Soviet Russia indirectly supported the anti-German coalition. Only later, when an anti-Soviet force established a base of operations in southern Russia under General Alexis Kaledin, opening the initial round of the Russian Civil War, did the Soviet authorities reevaluate their Rumanian policy.

Finally, Robins and Gumberg asked Trotsky to place in Murmansk some fifty boxcars of copper, nickel, and platinum, goods Robins and the Allied military attachés feared might slip into German hands. Trotsky promptly ordered the cars sent to Murmansk and placed in the care of the British fleet stationed at the northern port. The granting of Robins's requests exploded the myth that Bolsheviks were intransigent revolutionists or agents in Germany's employ. Recalling some of these protracted and difficult discussions, Robins later told a British envoy that Trotsky was "a four kind son of a bitch, but the greatest Jew since Christ. If the German General Staff bought Trotsky, they bought a lemon."⁹

Although Gumberg succeeded in convincing Trotsky of Robins's good faith, no amount of oratory on Gumberg's part could alter the displeasure the name William Boyce Thompson evoked in Soviet circles. The magnate's million-dollar contribution to the Provisional government could not be forgiven as easily as the few speeches made on its behalf by Robins. Regrettably, Thompson

would later be vilified by American public opinion which confused this grant to the Provisional government as a gift for Russian Communists. In view of the apparent flexibility of the Bolsheviks, Thompson agreed with Robins that the United States should be informed of the Russian situation. Contrary to reports then being circulated in Allied capitals, it seemed to Thompson and Robins that the Allies could prevent the Central Powers from gaining access to Russian raw materials and might possibly delay or stop altogether the conclusion of a separate peace.¹⁰

Toward the end of November, Thompson prepared to leave Russia. He realized that his alliance with Kerensky had eliminated his usefulness in dealing with Soviet Russia. The best purpose he could serve was to consolidate his considerable influence and try to persuade the Allies and America to deal with the existing Russian political situation. Thompson learned that his Exeter classmate Thomas P. Lamont had arrived in London along with President Wilson's close adviser, Colonel Edward M. House. He left Russia, appointing Robins as director of the commission seconded by Major Thomas Thacher. Thacher wired London requesting that Lamont wait for Thompson's arrival, which occurred on December 10. In London, Thompson set out with Lamont to talk over the Russian problem with high British officials, capped off by a luncheon interview with Prime Minister David Lloyd George. Everywhere Thompson went he bluntly told British statesmen of the stupidity of the Allied refusal to negotiate with the Bolsheviks.¹¹ He warned that if the Allies consistently spurned the Bolsheviks, the Soviet government would have no recourse but to seek a rapprochement with the Central Powers.

Thompson apparently impressed Lloyd George, for the prime minister promptly appointed Bruce Lockhart as an unofficial envoy to Petrograd. Lockhart, a romantic, colorful, and highly emotional individual, had been a British consul in Russia. His instructions, however, were of the vaguest sort—to put a monkey wrench in the separate peace negotiations between Russia and the Central Powers. Lockhart possessed all diplomatic privileges including the use of ciphers and a courier. These courtesies were obtained by permitting Maxim Litvinov, a Russian Bolshevik then residing in London, similar privileges.¹²

While Thompson thought he had influenced British policy, events demonstrated quite the opposite. At the same time Lockhart received his instructions, Britain and France signed a convention dividing Russia into spheres of interests as a prelude to military intervention. Thompson and Lamont left England aboard a transport, the converted luxury liner *Olympia*, as the guests of the British. Once back in Washington, Thompson spent a week trying to see the president. Wilson, displeased with Thompson's political activity in Russia, refused to grant him an interview. Little hope remained except to convince other administration members of his views. His talks with Bernard Baruch and Herbert Hoover accomplished little. Baruch could do nothing, and Hoover refused to see any value in negotiating or trying to influence Bolshevik anarchists.¹³

While the Wilson administration remained steadfast in its policy of procrastination, the success of the Robins and Gumberg initiatives opened other avenues of contact for the American Military Mission and the Committee on Public Information. Like Robins and Gumberg, General William V. Judson accepted the new situation in Petrograd for completely realistic reasons. In the aftermath of revolution, Judson first concerned himself with the embassy's safety. After a series of exchanges between attaché and ambassador on November 19 and 20, 1917, Francis reluctantly accepted the general's view that the Soviet government should provide the traditional security forces necessary to protect the embassy. More significant, Judson met Trotsky on December 1, a day prior to the opening of negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. The general's motives cannot be impugned. Vitaly concerned with the fate of American and Allied soldiers on the Western Front, Judson desired to influence the Soviet government's armistice terms. He wanted Soviet representatives at Brest-Litovsk to insist that all soldiers remain in place, avoiding a massive transfer of German troops between Eastern and Western fronts. Judson's talks with Trotsky had been sanctioned initially by Ambassador Francis. The Wilson administration, appalled by Judson's breach of policy, recalled the attaché. When Francis caught wind of his government's displeasure, the ambassador disavowed his own approval of the Judson-Trotsky conversations.¹⁴

The furor raised by the attaché's attempts to limit German forces on the Western Front also placed an official restraint on relations between the Red Cross Commission and the Soviet government. In elaborating a policy of nonrecognition, Secretary Lansing informed Francis that the Red Cross should discontinue its dialogue with the Bolsheviks. If the attaché could not engage in agreements with Smolny, neither should pseudomilitary members of the American Red Cross. Robins, with Francis's tacit approval, refused to abide by the State Department's directive and immediately put pressure, through the Red Cross War Council in Washington, on the United States government to make an exception to the nonintercourse rule. The Wilson administration eventually agreed that the Red Cross could not arrange transportation and distribution of supplies without communicating with the Soviets. However, the policy of permitting other informal relations with the ostracized regime did not receive definitive approval by the State Department until February 1918.¹⁵

In the meantime two events forced both Robins and Francis to violate the explicit instructions of their government. Gumberg's part in these incidents accurately reflected the subtle and unpublicized influence he used to improve contacts between America and Russia.

On December 21 Gumberg delivered to Robins his morning intelligence report on the Soviet government. Part of his information confirmed news of Andrei Kalpashnikov's arrest. Originally a Russian Red Cross representative, Kalpashnikov had been attached to Colonel Anderson's group in Rumania and had attempted to divert American Red Cross supplies from Petrograd warehouses to Rostov-on-Don rather than Jassy, seat of the Rumanian government. Hemmed in by the Central Powers, Rumania's government feared it might have to flee to Rostov. The fact that Rostov also served as headquarters for General Kaledin's anti-Soviet forces was an understandably suspicious coincidence in the mind of the Soviet authorities. That evening Trotsky invited Gumberg to the Alexander Theater where Trotsky delivered a scathing public speech exposing the incident. Relieved to hear Trotsky exonerate Robins, Gumberg nevertheless heard the commissar of foreign affairs vilify Ambassador Francis and the American government for

attempting to supply anti-Soviet troops. In the aftermath of Trotsky's speech the American embassy existed in a state of emotional siege, facing the possibility that Trotsky's verbal attack might evolve into more physical action. Fortunately, the only violence to erupt occurred two days later with the "arrest" of Kalpashnikov's train.¹⁶

Against the expressed will of the United States government, Robins and Gumberg continued their close relationship with the Soviets to secure the unhampered movement of supplies to Colonel Anderson in Rumania and to spare the American embassy an ugly incident. They talked with Trotsky about the Kalpashnikov affair and all its ramifications. These conversations eased Soviet-American tensions in Petrograd and resulted in the release of the arrested train and supplies upon Robins's promise that they would go to Jassy and not Rostov.¹⁷ The situation in Rumania, however, would continue to cause trouble and would force, despite the official policy of nonrecognition, a direct confrontation between Francis and Lenin.

By December 1917 the southern flanks of the Eastern Front had become a blur of Rumanian and Russian soldiers, enmeshed within the Moldavian territory of Rumania. These Russian troops formed an allegiance to the Soviet government, assisted in that direction by Bolshevik agitators such as Gumberg's brother Zorin. A justified fear grew in Rumanian circles that the territory not already occupied by the Central Powers might be conquered by Russian troops. Incidents broke out as the Rumanian government tried to isolate and disarm Russian soldiers. The activity angered Soviet Russia which responded by arresting Count Constantine Diamandi, Rumania's ambassador in Petrograd. This violation of diplomatic immunity had few precedents and proved to be a horror story for all foreign representatives then in Petrograd. By sheer longevity of service, Francis had become dean of the diplomatic corps. On January 14, 1918, the day following Diamandi's incarceration in the Peter and Paul Fortress, Francis summoned all members of the diplomatic community to the American embassy. The assembled body decided to compose a note of protest and to make a personal presentation of their views to Lenin.

Before the diplomats of nineteen countries could descend

upon Smolny for their collective protest in the afternoon, Gumberg spent part of the morning in conference with Lenin. He warned the Soviet leader that "if he wished to make Russia helpless before Germany and destroy his own party all he would have to do would be to keep the Rumanian in jail."¹⁸ He went on to suggest that as a matter of realistic politics, something Lenin appreciated, he should release Diamandi.

Now aware of the impact of the Diamandi arrest upon the capital's diplomatic corps, Lenin assured Gumberg that he would receive the delegation. In the audience with the diplomats, the founder of bolshevism appeared receptive and after accepting the petition and hearing their comments, he shook hands with each of them.¹⁹ The following day Diamandi became a free man, though still persona non grata with the Soviet government. The successful resolution of the Kalpashnikov and Diamandi affairs impressed the Wilson administration with the value of permitting its ambassador and the Red Cross Commission to continue unofficial relations with the unrecognized government of Russia.

While Gumberg played an important and at times crucial part in fostering communications between the Soviet government and the Red Cross Commission, he also enlisted in the propaganda work of Edgar Sisson's Committee on Public Information. Gumberg always seemed to commit himself to several different areas of employment at one time, frequently in a multiple effort to bring Americans and Russians closer together. The strange paradox in his relationship with Sisson is that Sisson is remembered as a Bolshevik baiter, a leading proponent of the theory that members of the Bolshevik elite received monies and instructions from Imperial Germany as paid agents of the Central Powers. Sisson's most infamous act occurred in October 1918, when he published under government auspices a collection of spurious documents purporting to prove his thesis. The appearance of *The German-Bolshevik Conspiracy*, sanctioned by the Committee on Public Information, made a significant contribution toward those hysterical attitudes on communism which loomed in the peculiar phenomena of events historians describe as the "Red Scare" in America.²⁰

Sisson's endeavor to prove a German-Bolshevik connection belied his earlier and successful attempt to work with the Soviet

government. Creel's lieutenant arrived in Petrograd in time to attend the farewell Thanksgiving dinner held in honor of Thompson. Occupying a room adjacent to the headquarters suite of the Red Cross Commission in the Hotel d'Europe, Sisson developed a close working relationship with Robins, who generously shared the services and talents of Gumberg. Initially Sisson concurred in the views on Soviet Russia taken by Robins, Gumberg, Judson, and his own assistant Arthur Bullard whom he brought from Moscow to head a news bureau. The urgency attached to their work to gain some influence with the Soviet government and prevent a sellout of Russia to the German militarists hit home in the presence of Count Wilhelm von Mirbach. German representative in Petrograd for talks on the commercial and financial aspects to the peace negotiations, Count Mirbach took up residence down the corridor from the rooms of Sisson and the Red Cross.²¹

Shortly after his arrival, Sisson wrote home about the Bolshevik method of reducing Germany's bargaining position without an army. "The Russians are sending leaflets into the German lines telling the soldiers to seize the German Government as they have seized theirs." Sisson concluded: "This does not look as if the Russian peace movement were German controlled." At first, Sisson did not consider the Bolsheviks to be German agents, but did avoid direct contact with the personnel of the Soviet government to prevent any taint of political meddling, a charge he knew President Wilson had held against Thompson and the Red Cross Commission. Thus Sisson relied on Gumberg as his intermediary with Soviet officials. Gumberg, for example, secured a printing plant for the use of the Committee on Public Information early in December 1917. By January 1918 Gumberg's usefulness in working with Soviet institutions prompted Sisson to place him in charge of organizing the distribution of the publications and motion pictures sponsored by the committee. The explicit cooperation of Smolny extended even to the point where American propaganda material ended up in *Die Fackel* (*The Spark*), a Bolshevik publication designed to propagandize German soldiers on the Eastern Front. Sisson had to admit to his family in America that "the Bolsheviks are decently human. I have been able to do the things I set out to do."²²

The Soviet government's cooperation with Sisson reached a pinnacle in January 1918. President Wilson's Fourteen Points speech started to arrive over the wire in Petrograd on January 10. The Bolshevik insurrection, call for peace, and withdrawal from war spurred on an effort to define war aims that President Wilson had begun as early as September 1917. When Wilson delivered his address before Congress on January 8, he mentioned specifically the Russo-German peace talks in his prefatory remarks. German demands at Brest-Litovsk provided Wilson an excellent contrast for his Fourteen Points. Undoubtedly, the president hoped to entice the Bolsheviks to the Allied cause or at least to disrupt the peace efforts in East Europe. Sisson had the document translated immediately into Russian and, together with Gumberg, set out for Smolny. Although Lenin was temporarily out of the city and Trotsky had joined the delegates at Brest-Litovsk, Gumberg convinced Trotsky's secretary, Shalyapina, to send a courier to Brest-Litovsk with those portions of Wilson's speech already translated. The following day Gumberg arranged a meeting with Lenin for Robins and Sisson, the first interview either man had with the Bolshevik leader. Lenin, seemingly impressed by Wilson's speech, personally took the copy, had it telegraphed to Trotsky, and gave the Americans his permission to broadcast the document in a variety of media including Soviet publications.²³

The Fourteen Points speech raised Lenin's hope for American recognition. Article six called for the evacuation from Russian territory of all foreign troops and implied an acceptance of the Soviet government when Wilson spoke of receiving Russia into the family of nations under "institutions of her own choosing."²⁴ Wilson's plea for no annexations or indemnities resembled the six-point peace proposal Soviet delegates presented at Brest-Litovsk. But action spoke louder than Wilson's words. The United States neither accepted the Soviet call for expanding the talks at Brest-Litovsk into a European-wide peace conference nor recognized the Soviet government.

January 11, 1918, marked the height of Soviet-American collaboration, and within a month Sisson would break with Robins and Gumberg. Ironically Gumberg provided Sisson with the first documents which led the former *Chicago Tribune* editor to believe

the Bolsheviks had been receiving money from the Germans. Gumberg collected the readily accessible forged papers as curiosities from his anti-Soviet friends in Petrograd. They were so patently false that British intelligence would have nothing to do with them, but they became the basis for Sisson's theory of a German-Bolshevik conspiracy.²⁵ By early February, Sisson no longer sought out the company of Gumberg and Robins. He virtually vacated to Arthur Bullard his post as director of the Russian Section of the Committee on Public Information in order to pursue his quest for more documents which might link bolshevism with the German enemy.

The shift of opinion evidenced by Sisson is perplexing. Undoubtedly events in mid-January, the arrest of Diamandi, the acquisition of Gumberg's documents, and especially the demise of the Constituent Assembly, contributed to Sisson's change of attitude toward the Bolsheviks. Sisson attended the proceedings of the assembly, convened on January 18, 1918, in the Tauride Palace, in the company of Gumberg.²⁶ Delayed by war, revolution, and the Provisional government's procrastination, the Constituent Assembly's original purpose had been eclipsed by events. Before Bolsheviks assumed power, the people had already taken the question of property into their own hands and had spontaneously established institutions of government, the Soviets. The basic problems thrown up by the revolution no longer existed, and members of the assembly could only stamp their approval to the *fait accompli* or attempt to make a political move to reduce the power of the one party, the Bolsheviks, which had accepted the revolution as found. Under the circumstances, the Soviet government permitted the opening of the assembly but then arbitrarily dissolved it by threats of violence after a one-day session.²⁷ While Gumberg could understand the Soviet government's blunt actions, Sisson became disillusioned. The Bolsheviks obstructed the one and only attempt to fashion a constitution by representatives of all sectors of Russia's society. Thereafter the Allied powers considered, as did Sisson, the Soviet government to be led by usurpers and this view seriously impeded the normalization of diplomatic channels between Russia and the rest of the world. The demise of the assembly took place at a crucial moment in the talks then recessed at Brest-Litovsk. It

guaranteed that Russia would face the grasping demands of the Central Powers alone.

Before Gumberg and Sisson broke off their friendship, their alliance cemented the fate of one of the great tragicomedies played out between the Soviet government and members of the American colony in Petrograd. In mid-January, John Reed talked the Soviet regime into appointing him Russian consul general to New York. This action had a selfish and logical explanation in that as an official representative of Russia, Reed would be able to transport safely back to America materials he had collected for his book, *Ten Days That Shook the World*. Reed's biographer admitted, however, that what Reed saw "in the appointment was a recognition that pleased him and an opportunity for a dramatic gesture of the kind that he enjoyed."²⁸

Sisson complained bitterly to Gumberg, Robins, and Francis about Reed's appointment, particularly after Reed delivered a speech before the Third Congress of Soviets, meeting a few days after the aborted Constituent Assembly in the same Tauride Palace. Gumberg required little prodding from Sisson and the other Americans to take the matter into his own hands. He told Reed's close friend Albert Rhys Williams that he considered the appointment detrimental to Russian-American relations.²⁹

But the deterioration of the Gumberg-Reed friendship from the time of the November insurrection undoubtedly spurred Gumberg to go directly to Lenin. Gumberg scored his point by two arguments. First, he stressed that Reed was an irresponsible romantic whose explosive temperament would not likely improve Soviet-American relations. Second, he showed Lenin a prospectus Reed had prepared for Robins and Sisson on the use of American capital in Soviet Russia.³⁰ Max Eastman, who became Trotsky's literary agent, later remarked that to Lenin and the Soviet leaders the prospectus "looked either like a disrespectful joke, or a scheme for selling out their revolution."³¹ Lenin canceled the appointment. Reed never forgave Gumberg for this behind-the-scenes talk with Lenin. Reed departed Russia early in February and suffered delays and harassment in his travels. Thereafter he could not mention Gumberg's name without adding a string of four-letter epithets.

Curiously, Williams held Sisson responsible for Reed's difficulties. Nevertheless, the picture of Gumberg running to Lenin on a mission of spite is not very pretty. Certainly in his own mind, Reed had justification for considering Gumberg's act despicable. The episode revealed one of the few times when Gumberg used his influence to satisfy a personal grudge. Yet Gumberg's American contemporaries unanimously agreed that Reed's appointment would have been received by the American government as an act of supreme insolence on the part of Soviet Russia on par with the publication of the secret treaties, removal of Russia from the war, and destruction of the Constituent Assembly. In the absence of an agreement to exchange unofficial envoys with diplomatic privileges as in the British-Russian arrangement for Lockhart and Litvinov, it would be difficult to imagine the United States accepting an American national as Russian consul general with anything but studied contempt. Reed could not realistically expect the Wilson administration to accord him diplomatic immunity or acknowledge his consul status. So, while Gumberg's motives were undoubtedly linked to his pique with Reed, he performed an important service, eliminating an unnecessary conflict and possible irritant to Soviet-American relations. Had America and Russia exchanged diplomatic representatives, an American ambassador would have vigorously protested Reed's appointment. The difference between such an ambassador and Gumberg would have been the personal commitment Gumberg brought to Lenin to get Reed's appointment reversed.

Thus far had the deterioration of Soviet-American relations progressed. The interests of the United States government were being maintained by an obscure secretary to the American Red Cross, a man who worked as an informal liaison to reduce friction between governments in the Kalpashnikov, Diamandi, and Reed affairs so that the lines of communication between Russia and America would not be completely severed.

3

RED LITMUS PAPER



TWO DECADES LATER a scholar could refer to the talks at Brest-Litovsk as “the forgotten peace.”¹ But in the winter of 1917–1918 the negotiations between Russia and Central Powers were anything but forgotten in the minds of Allied officials. Maintenance of an Eastern Front concerned America’s policymakers. They understood little of Russia’s revolution except that Bolsheviks broke every traditional code of national behavior and sought peace from America’s enemy. The Bolsheviks, however, did not conspire to take Russia out of war. Lenin’s party accepted the obvious. After the disastrous July offensive, a Russian army no longer existed in any recognizable form. Lenin, never a pacifist, wanted peace only to preserve his and his party’s power.

Between January and March 1918, Soviet Russia and America shared the same enemy, for Imperial Germany threatened Lenin’s position just as much as it imperiled Woodrow Wilson’s leadership in making the world “safe for democracy.” President Wilson, moving tortuously between the conflicting recommendations received from personal and official advisers, seemed too paralyzed to face forthrightly the challenge and reality of revolutionary Russia. His policy drifted uneasily upon the assumption that Bolsheviks were radical usurpers whose tenuous hold on power would be broken in the near future by legitimate or at least moderate, sane, and disciplined Russians. Swift events, distance, and simple ignorance also contributed to America’s failure to take advantage of Russo-

German friction. By contrast, proximity to these events gave Alexander Gumberg an entirely different perspective. He noted the possibilities for Soviet-American collaboration and made, with Raymond Robins, every effort to maintain a dialogue between governments. From Gumberg's vantage point, intractability toward Bolsheviks caused the Wilson administration seemingly to abandon Russia to Germany, brought the end of the Red Cross Commission's role, and prompted him to start back to America to reeducate the public about Russia's revolution.

On February 10, 1918, Leon Trotsky, who had earlier assumed personal command over Soviet representatives, took his Russian delegates out of the peace negotiations. The Central Powers had countered Russia's demand for peace without annexations or indemnities by treating independently with the Ukrainian separatist movement and by occupying key Russian islands off the Baltic coast. Frustrated in negotiations, unable to place an army in the field, and without hope of Allied backing, Trotsky outlined his no-war, no-peace formula before the astonished eyes of the Central Powers. By refusing to sign a peace, he avoided compromising the principles of the Soviet government. He hoped unrealistically that his audacious move, declaring Russia's refusal to continue fighting, might prevent a new offensive.² Involved in a titanic struggle, however, Germany's field commanders gave little attention to world opinion, the only remaining hope for Russia's salvation.

Gumberg and Robins held no illusions as to the probable response of the German militarists to Trotsky's flamboyant strategy. While Lenin desired peace to consolidate the gains of revolution, he had no love for Imperial Germany. Many party members, the so-called Left Communists, wanted to resume the war against the Central Powers, a "holy war" designed to liberate Germany from the kaiser. The United States, for a brief period, had the opportunity to move toward de facto recognition of the existing Russian government and to aid and support that government in the effort to make Russia enough of a nuisance to Germany to prevent large-scale shifts of military personnel to the Western Front. As Gumberg told Albert Rhys Williams: "If we turn aside from them

now, it will mean a long period of reaction for us—because once my government starts out on a new path, all its spokesmen defend it, and it rolls along, and it's awfully hard to reverse it. This now is the crossroads for America—as well as Russia."³

Three days after Trotsky stalked out of the peace negotiations, Gumberg learned directly from Karl Radek about the talks at Brest-Litovsk. Journalist and delegate to the conference, Radek had responsibility for Soviet propaganda, and Gumberg's association with him eased the job of distributing American propaganda. Radek revealed to Gumberg that at Brest-Litovsk, Trotsky had tried to use the threat of American recognition and assistance as a bargaining weapon with the Central Powers. Trotsky apparently had American cigars shipped from Petrograd in order to emphasize this ruse of American-Russian collaboration.⁴

The day after Gumberg discussed the peace negotiations with Radek, Secretary of State Robert Lansing authorized Ambassador Francis to continue informal talks with the Soviet government in seeming acknowledgment that events at Brest-Litovsk might permit closer relations with Soviet Russia. Over the next few days, Robins and Gumberg convinced Francis that mutual antagonism toward Germany could form the basis for Russian-American détente. According to a contemporary who knew both Americans, "Gumberg's arguments in Robins' mouth made a most convincing case for recognition."⁵

Developments, though, proceeded too quickly to change official American policy. Within eight days of Trotsky's denouement, the German Command recovered from the temporary shock of Trotsky's no-war, no-peace tactic and began on February 18, 1918, a general offensive along the Eastern Front. The Imperial German Army met little or no resistance. While the Soviet government attempted to stop the offensive by agreeing to the original peace terms, the German Command delayed its response for several agonizing days.

Recognizing its precarious position, the Soviet government prepared to transfer its capital to Moscow. Under those conditions the American embassy staff had to leave to avoid falling into German hands. Robins and Gumberg arranged and accompanied the

flight of Francis and the embassy personnel to Vologda, a city 250 miles northeast of Moscow and fortuitously situated at the junction of railroad lines leading eastward to Vladivostok and northward to Archangel.

In Vologda, Gumberg kept touch with the one-sided German-Russian military confrontation through Trotsky's secretary, Shalyapina, and Robins communicated with Lenin.⁶ From the American viewpoint the news they received held little encouragement. The Germans finally replied to Soviet peace overtures with an ultimatum. Negotiations had to resume in two days and a settlement had to be reached within three days thereafter. Trotsky quietly resigned to George Chicherin his post as commissar of foreign affairs and he left to lesser lights the onerous task of signing on March 3, 1918, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

The Draconian peace removed from Russian control mammoth chunks of territory, including the Ukraine and what would later become the countries of Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Poland. Other adjustments concerned the Turkish-Russian border. Signatures on the treaty confirmed the loss to Russia of one-third of her population.⁷ Though Lenin desired peace at any cost, considerable opposition appeared against ratifying a treaty which would reverse the results of three centuries of Russian history.

Aware that the Bolshevik party and the specially called Fourth Congress of Soviets would ratify the treaty only with great reluctance and dissension, both Lenin and Trotsky began sounding out the Allies on the possibility of military aid. The initiative in this direction had been taken already by Jacques Sadoul of the French Military Mission. In a series of conversations with the Soviet regime, Sadoul pledged military support to the government. The Sadoul talks with Trotsky, shortly appointed commissar of war, ultimately found fruition in the highly unorthodox creation of a military advisory board composed of members of the Italian, French, British, and American missions. During the uncertain and chaotic days between the resumption of the German offensive and the final ratification of the treaty, Trotsky also approved a British landing of troops at Murmansk on March 1, 1918. Both the Allies and Russia felt Germany might capture Murmansk and use it as a sub-

marine base. Finally, Trotsky and Lenin demonstrated their keen concern in securing Allied and American relief in a series of conferences held on March 5, 1918, with Robins and Gumberg.⁸

On the night of March 4–5 Robins, accompanied by Gumberg, returned by train to Petrograd from Vologda.⁹ In the morning they made their way to Smolny Institute where the Bolsheviks were in the process of gathering their papers for the move to Moscow. Trotsky advised Robins and Gumberg that Lenin possessed some flexibility on the treaty. He surprised the Americans by stating that if the United States and the Allies would guarantee economic and military assistance to Russia, Lenin would join the Left Communist faction of the party and refuse to sanction the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Trotsky also told his visitors that the Soviet government was considering moving the capital beyond the Ural Mountains to Ekaterinburg and reestablishing a military front against Germany at the Urals.

Robins may have been a romantic, an overly emotional though effective speaker and a religious visionary, but he possessed more than a grain of common sense. He insisted Trotsky place his statements in writing. The Americans left Smolny to give the government time to prepare a written statement. They returned in the afternoon to join Trotsky and Lenin in a frugal dinner. Lenin handed Robins a manuscript which he passed on to Gumberg who quickly translated it. Robins read Gumberg's rough translation. Should the peace between Germany and Russia fail, Lenin and Trotsky asked:

- 1) Can the Soviet Government rely on the support of the United States of North America, Great Britain, and France in its struggle against Germany?
- 2) What kind of support could be furnished in the nearest future and on what conditions—military equipment, transportation, supplies, living necessities?
- 3) What kind of support would be furnished particularly and specially by the United States?

Should Japan—in consequence of an open or tacit understanding with Germany or without such an understanding—attempt to seize Vladivostok and the Eastern Siberian Railway, which would threaten to cut off Russia from the Pacific Ocean and would greatly

impede the concentration of Soviet troops toward the East about the Urals—in such case what steps would be taken by the United States, to prevent a Japanese landing on our Far East?¹⁰

Gumberg and Robins recognized this to be the most serious gesture yet made by the Soviet government to gain recognition and help in the common cause against Germany. Scholars have tried to make light of or minimize the Soviet proposal because of its interrogatory format, but *quid pro quos* are the stuff of diplomacy, and it would be folly to dismiss the Soviet paper as only an attempt to retain the allegiances of Robins and Gumberg. In their considerable excitement, they left Smolny to seek the company of Bruce Lockhart, Britain's special representative to Russia. They showed the document to Lockhart who had held similar conferences with Trotsky earlier in the day. Lockhart gave Robins a copy of a telegram he had sent to the British Foreign Office, a portion of which read: "The Congress meets on March 12. Empower me to inform Lenin that the question of Japanese intervention had been shelved . . . that we are prepared to support the bolsheviks in so far as they will oppose Germany. . . . In return for this, there is every chance that war will be declared."¹¹

That evening Gumberg feverishly improved his translation and Robins, aided by a member of the American Military Mission, coded the Soviet paper into cipher. After transmitting it to Vologda at 2:30 A.M. on March 6, 1918, for retransmission to the United States, Robins and Gumberg discovered that the American embassy staff at Vologda could do nothing with the document. The military code had been returned to Petrograd by a member of the mission and the paper had to be hand-carried by Robins and Gumberg to Francis before any thought could be given to cabling its contents to the State Department.¹² By the time the Soviet paper had been sent to the State Department, Robins and Gumberg had left Vologda to attend the Fourth Congress of Soviets meeting in the Hall of Nobles to accept or reject the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

The arrival of Robins and Gumberg in Moscow coincided with the establishment of the government in the new capital and the convening of delegates for the Congress. Seeking accommodations

became the first order of business. Gumberg acquired several rooms at the Hotel Elite through Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич, secretary to the Council of People's Commissars.¹³ The Red Cross Commission shared its rooms with the British envoy Lockhart.

Finding a place to stay proved far easier than coping with the difficult events which followed. According to Robins, Lenin in anticipation of a positive American response to the Soviet inquiries delayed the opening of the Congress.¹⁴ After the Congress convened on March 14, 1918, the only word received from the United States came in the form of a message from President Wilson who spoke in generalities expressing his sympathies for the Russian people. Without any hope of American and Allied assistance, Robins and Gumberg felt the disappointment of watching Lenin persuade the delegates to vote in favor of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty.

It would have been logical at this point for relations to terminate between the Soviet government and the Red Cross and other members of the American colony in Russia, but in fact cooperation continued unabated. One of the thorny problems facing the Soviet regime had been the possibility of a Japanese invasion of Siberia. By the arguments of Robins and Sadoul, Francis concluded that the United States should not support such an intervention, since a Japanese invasion would throw Russia and Germany closer together. Robins and Francis did not singly influence the Wilson administration which faced heavy Allied pressure for American approval of Japanese intervention. President Wilson, with the backing of advisers Colonel House, Root, and William C. Bullitt, refused temporarily to sanction the use of Japan in the Far East as an Allied agent to reestablish an Eastern Front and prevent the arming of German prisoners of war then held in Siberia. Quite unaware of the contradictory pressures exerted on the president, the Soviet government may well have believed their relations with Robins and Gumberg had been decisive. Lenin indicated as much to Robins.¹⁵

Since the Soviet government felt it could use the Americans as an indirect instrument to check Japanese imperialism, the new commissar of war, Trotsky, actively sought Allied assistance in another area, building the new Red Army. Trotsky sought the ad-

vice of the Allied military missions, and for a brief time Robins, Lockhart, and the military attachés of Italy, France, Great Britain, and the United States constituted an informal committee to guide the organization of the Soviet force. They hoped that once the Red Army had been fashioned, the government might tear up the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and again engage the Central Powers in war.¹⁶

Further cooperation persisted between Red Cross and Soviet officials. In a letter from Lenin and Chicherin, the Soviet government expressed to Robins its appreciation for the aid rendered by the Red Cross. Although Russia formally stopped hostilities with the Central Powers, Lenin and Chicherin hoped the "useful and valuable work of the American Red Cross" would not be "considered as ended." Thus Gumberg continued his participation in the distribution of dwindling Red Cross supplies. In his frequent absences from Moscow, Robins left to Gumberg's care not only the management of Red Cross affairs but all matters pertaining to the informal relations with the Soviet government.¹⁷

Robins and Gumberg may also have indirectly triggered the Soviet government's raids against the capital's anarchists. The Moscow Federation of Anarchists had been an ally of the Bolsheviks during the early days of the government, but by the spring of 1918 their lawless activities had become an embarrassment, a reminder to the Allies that the Soviet regime lacked firm control over the country. On that morning of April 9, 1918, Robins and Gumberg stopped their Rolls-Royce outside the Central Telegraph Office in Moscow. Robins entered the office and sent a message to Francis at Vologda. When he returned he discovered that the car was surrounded by ten anarchists who had decided to requisition it. Gumberg had jumped to the fender of the automobile, evidently prepared to defend the colonel's vehicle to the last. (A year later Robins reported the events to the Overman committee of the Senate investigating Bolshevik propaganda. Robins's recounting of Gumberg's heroics brought spontaneous applause from committee members and witnesses present at the hearings.) One of the anarchists placed the muzzle of his cocked rifle deep in Gumberg's midsection, threatening to blast him in half. Gumberg "grinned

and said to the anarchist thieves: 'You are not afraid, are you?' " The nonplussed attitude of Gumberg and the raw courage of Robins temporarily confused the anarchists. Both Americans rushed into the Rolls-Royce and ordered the driver to proceed. The anarchists climbed all over the car. Exhibiting more discretion than valor, their driver accepted directions from the anarchists. The car sped to the anarchists' headquarters where they placed it in a garage and bodily evicted the Americans from their vehicle. Finding argument useless, Robins and Gumberg helplessly watched the anarchists remove the American flag and Red Cross insignia from the car.¹⁸

Neither man enjoyed the adventure and each set about in his own way to regain the stolen vehicle. Robins reported the incident to Chicherin concluding with a left-handed threat: "I must make some report before too long to my government upon this incident and am desirous to be able to say that the matter has been entirely liquidated in harmony with the dignity and effective power of the Russian government." As Robins prepared his protest for Chicherin, Gumberg, aware of the sources of Soviet power, took a different tack. Using his considerable knowledge and influence, Gumberg brought the matter to the attention of Felix Dzerzhinsky, chairman of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission to Fight Counter-Revolution, Sabotage and Speculation, an organization more familiarly known by its initials as the CHEKA. Dzerzhinsky gave Gumberg his written assurance that the automobile would be returned. Indeed three days after the Rolls-Royce had been taken, it was returned to its owners in slightly altered but driveable condition. The Soviet government had acquired the vehicle after a massive night-time raid on all the nests of anarchists then belonging to the Moscow Federation.¹⁹

The raid symbolized Robins's influence with the government and that government's ability to preserve order. Robins later asserted that anarchists, not Communists, had received German help and claimed to have seen German machine guns of the newest type at the anarchists' headquarters. While sufficient evidence is not available to prove this allegation it would seem that Robins through Gumberg did possess enough weight with Soviet authorities to be a catalyst in the decision to obliterate the anarchists.

Their removal eliminated a politically offensive group on the periphery of Communist circles. The Soviet government's action certainly appeared to have been prompted, at least partially, by its sincere desire to improve relations with the United States government. Although the regime did not specifically seek recognition, after the April incident the Soviet press speculated that Robins might become the new and official ambassador to Russia.²⁰

Despite this groundwork for closer relations established by Robins and Gumberg, it had to be abandoned. For the Wilson administration, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty sealed the policy of non-recognition. Already perceived as anti-democrats and revolutionary socialists, the Bolsheviks now became full-fledged traitors to the war. The United States government did not concur with Robins that Russia might yet contribute to America's war strategy. Robins began to sense that his pleas for cooperation fell on deaf ears in Washington. He warned Red Cross leader Henry P. Davison, then in Paris, that if tangible support for his work and a more conciliatory policy by the Allies were not forthcoming, he would have to terminate the Red Cross Commission in Russia.

A series of events conspired to end the commission. America's consul general in Moscow, Madden Summers, married to an anti-Bolshevik Russian, possessed no enthusiasm for the Soviet government. Shortly before his death, Summers cabled Washington calling for Robins's dismissal and threatening resignation if his request was not met. Summers suspected Robins and Gumberg of being Bolsheviks. The consul general learned that Gumberg had asked Louis E. Brown, a friend and correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, to make inquiries to his American office about the disposition of the Sisson papers.²¹ It seemed to Summers that Robins and his translator had been engaged to do intelligence work for the Soviet government.

At the same time, Edgar Sisson, still on his way home to America, wired from London, begging the Wilson administration to recall from Russia American personnel, particularly those associated with the American Red Cross and the Committee on Public Information. He predicted that the Bolsheviks would use the Americans as hostages and make a "public show of their helplessness, thus exploiting before the Russian masses their ability to in-

sult with impunity the representatives of powerful peoples." Upset with Robins's all too sympathetic ties with Soviet Russia and fearful that American lives might be endangered by their continued presence in Soviet-held territory, the State Department directed Cornelius Bliss, acting chairman of the American Red Cross War Council, to order the Red Cross Commission home. By the time Bliss sent his telegram on April 24, 1918, Robins had already decided to leave. Few Red Cross medical supplies remained in Moscow. On April 20, 1918, Major Allen Wardwell, who stayed in Petrograd, reported the existence of only 23,000 cans of milk, enough for one week's distribution. The total supply situation of both Petrograd and Moscow had deteriorated so badly over the winter that the remaining members of the Red Cross Commission had been forced to break open and consume some of the relief supplies.²²

The Russian experiences shared by Robins and Gumberg left an indelible mark upon their later careers. To the end of his stay Robins maintained a close working relationship with the Soviet leaders, who expressed to him their "gratitude for those great services" rendered by the Red Cross. Shortly before his departure Lenin gave him a nine-page memorandum on "Russian American Commercial Relations," in hope of restoring trade between the countries. Lenin through Robins offered American business raw materials in return for assistance in rebuilding the war-torn country. For his part Robins promised both Lenin and Trotsky that he would continue to interpret Russia's new democracy to Americans. Robins, sporadically though at times with great intensity, kept his promise and for the next fifteen years he used his political and oratorical talents to keep alive the recognition issue and to plead for a more balanced appraisal of Russia's revolution.²³

To Gumberg's intimacy with the leaders of Russia was added a new dimension: political influence in America, which sprang from the bonds of friendship developed between him and Robins. By the spring of 1918 they had become inseparable and Gumberg did not consider returning to America at any other time or with anyone else except Robins. On the other hand, Zorin, after a series of adventures in Rumania, continued to work for the party as a judge in a revolutionary tribunal. Gumberg's other brother, Veniamin, a Menshevik and anti-Communist, required Gumberg's connections

to prevent incarceration by the Soviet regime. The struggles and political values held by Zorin and Veniamin could not be experienced by their brother whose personality inclined him to lampoon ideology rather than fight for it.²⁴

Nevertheless, Gumberg wanted to bring Americans and Russians together. His ties with *Novy Mir*, with the Committee on Public Information, and with journalists Charles Russell, Albert Rhys Williams, Bessie Beatty, and Charles Smith, as well as Soviet correspondents Karl Radek and Boris Reinstein, led him into a public relations effort to keep open the lines of communication between the two peoples. Late in April, after the Red Cross Commission had been ordered out of Russia, Gumberg and Lenin agreed that the *New Yorker* could make a genuine contribution to better relations by establishing a public information program in the United States. Out of their talks came a written directive from Lenin which assured Gumberg complete access to all printed materials held by the Soviet government on its recent history. Like John Reed and Edgar Sisson before him, Gumberg began collecting newspapers and other printed matter, not to write a memorable volume on the revolution or to prove a German-Bolshevik conspiracy, but to present a more balanced and as far as possible accurate picture of Soviet life to the American press. To this end Gumberg received an appointment from the Petrograd Telegraph Agency, precursor of TASS, as American representative. In order to gain a foothold with the American news media, Gumberg asked the Associated Press correspondent Charles Smith to write a letter of introduction to Melville E. Stone, general manager of the Associated Press in New York City. Smith spoke of Gumberg as "the medium through which the American Embassy kept in touch with the new government" and as a "man with fuller knowledge than anyone I know concerning Russia's history for the last year." Finally, on the day before he left Moscow, May 14, 1918, Gumberg bid farewell to Trotsky. The war commissar asked Gumberg to be his literary agent, safeguarding the rights to his book *The International and the War*. Gumberg also carried with him Trotsky's manuscript *Our Revolution*, which Gumberg later had published in New York.²⁵

After a relatively uneventful trip, Gumberg, Robins, and their traveling companion Louis E. Brown arrived in Vladivostok on

May 30, 1918. The journey by train across Siberia had taken sixteen days, slightly longer than usual due to a delay when one of the engines jumped the track. All across the Eurasian land mass the three companions witnessed Soviet power in complete authority. Their pass, written by Lenin, smoothed all obstacles Gumberg could not overcome. On the way to and in Vladivostok the three met old friends and acquaintances. In Khabarovsk, they paused briefly to attend a session of the Far Eastern Council of People's Commissars, presided over by the Chicago lawyer Alexander Krasnoshchekov, known to both Robins and Gumberg. The former mayor of Vladivostok, Agarev, greeted the three men on their arrival. He had been an editor of *Novy Mir*.²⁶ Then too, Gumberg, Brown, and Robins visited with Williams. Williams's friend Bessie Beatty had left in January, carrying with her a report on the Red Cross to Henry P. Davison. John Reed was already in New York after a series of adventures, but Williams remained in Russia until the summer of 1918, writing articles for the Vladivostok newspaper, *Peasant and Worker*.

Williams saw the Americans off as they embarked on the *Kamo Maru* for the long voyage to Seattle on June 6, 1918. He later recalled the bon voyages to be rather sad and the mood of the Americans to be quite glum. Robins, too late to change his plans, learned that his recall had been reconsidered and that he could have stayed three more weeks in Russia. Bending under the weight of heavy Allied pressure, the Wilson administration was reevaluating its policy on intervention and seemed to hope that Robins could secure Bolshevik approval for the landing of Allied troops in Siberia.²⁷ The news west of Vladivostok further dispirited the Americans. Czechoslovakian troops, prisoners of czarist Russia, had been organized by Thomas Masaryk into a fighting force for the Allies. They rejected their former subject status to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Soviet government agreed with the Allied request to let these troops leave Russia by way of Vladivostok on their way by sea to France and the Western Front. At the last minute insufficient transport at Vladivostok forced a reconsideration of the Czechoslovakian route in favor of the northern ports at Murmansk and Archangel. By the time the Allies could decide on a policy the former prisoners were armed and strung out all along the Siberian rail-

road. Until the Allies developed a unified policy in regard to these soldiers, Trotsky decided on what appeared to be a prudent course—to have the Czech army disarmed. Local Soviet officials along the railroad tried to carry out the policy, but the Czech army, in a foreign country, being shunted about without adequate information, refused to surrender its weapons. Incidents occurred and multiplied between Soviet and Czech troops. Highly organized, the Czech army proceeded to take matters into its own hands.

By the time Gumberg, Robins, and Brown boarded the *Kamo Maru* most of the railroad from Vladivostok to the Urals had come under the jurisdiction of the Czechs. Within weeks President Wilson approved Allied and American intervention, ostensibly to aid the peaceful departure of the Czech army. In reality Washington concluded that Japan would land troops with or without American approval and an American presence would hopefully brake Japanese imperialism. From the time of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, American officials expressed concern for German prisoners of war whom, it was thought, were being armed by the Bolsheviks. Despite evidence to the contrary gathered by the American Red Cross, American and British Military missions, and American consular officials, the United States joined Japan and the other Allies in a massive intervention program to “save” Czechs from “armed” German troops. The litmus paper turned red in President Wilson’s acid test for American goodwill toward Russia. The revolt of the Czechs and the subsequent destruction of Soviet authority paved the way for the temporary elevation to power of counterrevolutionary forces all along the Siberian railroad. Assisted by the Czechs and then American and Allied forces, these so-called Whites began and perpetuated a brutal civil war. The Czechs provided the Wilson administration with a means to intervene in Russia without violating publicly the president’s own call for the self-determination of peoples and for the territorial integrity of Russia. This new force solved temporarily Wilson’s dilemma of how to balance his opposition to revolutionary socialism with his moral precepts. The almost subtle anti-Bolshevik nature of American intervention was revealed in the actions of Ambassador Boris Bakhmetev. The United States permitted the intrepid representative to disburse millions of dollars of funds, intended originally for

the defunct Provisional government, for arms and ammunition. Through Bakhmetev, the American government bolstered and subsidized the anti-Bolshevik forces with over 200,000 weapons. The goodwill President Wilson wished upon the Russian people choked and perished in Russian blood. Gumberg and his friends experienced the last unobstructed train ride across Russia until 1922.²⁸

Between Gumberg and Williams, the good-byes were not without some humor. Reflecting upon Williams's unorthodox Russian career, including his participation in an international socialist brigade, Gumberg could not resist throwing out one more parting shot to his companion of the night ride to the Winter Palace on the day of the Bolshevik insurrection. "The trouble with you writing fellows is that it's not enough for you to record history; you insist on making it, too." Williams retorted with affection, "Not everyone can be so modest as you, Alex, or have your talent for making history—but always in the background."²⁹ For the next fifteen years Gumberg did make history, in his quiet unobtrusive way seeking to neutralize the acid poured on American-Russian relations by war, revolution, and intervention.

4

THE UNOBTRUSIVE PUBLICIST



WHEN ALEXANDER GUMBERG returned to the United States, he expected to operate a part-time information bureau which would provide detached truth about Soviet Russia. Enjoying the spring breezes on board ship, he could not have fathomed the coming storm he would face after landing in America. Within weeks Gumberg saw his plans destroyed. The issue of helping Soviet Russia against the German enemy no longer existed in the American matrix. Intervention and the amalgamation of Bolsheviks with Huns ended all prospects for promoting Russian recognition or even operating a news agency. Gumberg's lack of ideological commitment further complicated his life. Possessing strong ties with both Soviet Russia and the United States only made him suspect to American radicals and red-baiters alike. Gradually, Gumberg overcame his handicap to support and assist quietly important publicists and publications which appraised Russia in positive or at least rational terms. For the next three years Gumberg worked to correct the erroneous image Russia evoked in the American mind in order to achieve reconciliation between his adopted and native lands.

The *Kamo Maru* docked at Seattle on June 20, 1918. Gumberg, Raymond Robins, and Louis Brown overcame mixed feelings about Russian events to share a common joy at being home again. Their exuberance faded quickly, however. Instead of hailing Robins for his generous and humane services to the Russian people, federal agents searched his companions as if they carried a new disease,

bolshevism, which might prove fatally infectious on American soil. Robins was "quarantined": the Wilson administration enjoined him from making any public statements on Russia. Perplexed at this ill treatment, the men proceeded to Chicago where they received a warmer welcome from William Boyce Thompson and Thomas Thacher. The reunited leaders of the Red Cross Commission then traveled by train to Washington, D.C., to begin a fruitless lobbying campaign to prevent American intervention in Russia.¹

For a while Gumberg continued to work for the Red Cross, but he left Robins to reestablish himself in New York. In different times and circumstances his new life in Greenwich Village might have been idyllic. He was independent. From his various Russian activities, he had saved a modest amount of money which gave him financial security.²

Gumberg's employment as the North American representative for the Petrograd Telegraph Agency (PTA), though, proved illusory. Since the Allied embargo of Soviet Russia prohibited use of the cables, Gumberg could perform no service for the PTA. It would not be until 1923 that the Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA), successor to the PTA, could sponsor an American correspondent, Kenneth Durant, in New York. Nevertheless, Gumberg worked casually for Thacher's law firm of Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett while also acting as a paid consultant on Russian affairs for Allen Wardwell's law firm of Stetson, Jennings & Russell. He delivered expert testimony on Soviet Russia's confiscation policies in civil litigation concerned with American property in Russia.³

Logically, Gumberg should have found an outlet for his talents with the Russian Soviet Government Bureau. Established early in 1919 in the World Tower Building by Ludwig C. A. K. Martens and his assistant Santeri Nuerteva, the bureau became the leading disseminator of information on the new Russian government through its journal, *Soviet Russia*. Martens had been appointed by Soviet Russia as the official representative for America in January 1919. The bureau, partially financed by czarist jewels, received additional support from American business through the American Commercial Association to Promote Trade with Russia. Martens failed to open trade or diplomatic relations. The State Department refused to acknowledge Martens's credentials in March 1919. Al-

though Martens made tentative contracts with numerous business firms for \$30 million, they went unfulfilled. The Federal Reserve Board prohibited the import or export of Russian rubles in February 1919 and the State Department, through its control of the War Trade Board's Russian licensing policy, would not allow export licenses for American manufactures going to Soviet Russia.⁴

Whatever optimism Gumberg held for spearheading the information program through the Martens Mission diminished in the Red Scare. The amalgam Edgar Sisson initiated, linking hatred for Germans with communism, combined with labor unrest to culminate in January 1920 when officials arrested 4,000 alleged radicals in thirty-three cities. Like Robins, Gumberg suffered continual harassment and surveillance by federal secret service agents. Possessing through Robins contacts with high-ranking public officials, Gumberg avoided some of the worst moments of the Red Scare. From the instant he entered the United States, though, federal authorities treated him as one suspected of spying for an unfriendly power. Only his sense of humor prevented him from becoming bitter toward the government which suspected him of treason. Floyd Odlum, then a junior clerk for Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett, recalled that Gumberg leased a first-floor apartment for the convenience of the federal agents and placed outside his window a bench permitting the agents a measure of relaxation while watching his activities. "When he went out he would say hello to them and tell them where he was going so they could follow him easily."⁵

At first Gumberg found his influence to be quite limited in both American and Soviet journalistic circles. The letter of introduction correspondent Charles S. Smith generously wrote to Melville Stone, general manager of the Associated Press, failed to impress the AP director. Stone's close friend, Ambassador David R. Francis, had warned that Robins was a pseudo-Bolshevik and should be ignored.⁶ Hence Stone would have nothing to do with Robins's companion, Gumberg. He experienced greater disappointment in the frequent snubs and suspicions encountered among American and Russian-American friends who held views sympathetic to Soviet Russia. When John Reed returned to New York he had broadcast to all who would listen that Gumberg clung to pernicious counterrevolutionary ideas and could not be trusted.

While federal authorities had Gumberg under surveillance, he endured slander and whispers behind his back from those most likely to appreciate his thoughts about the Russian revolution. Reed's assertions kept Gumberg outside the radicals supporting Martens and the Russian Soviet Government Bureau. For a year he tried to ward off or minimize Reed's verbal assault.

Finally, in 1919 Gumberg asked Max Eastman to act as a mediator. Eastman later became an opponent of Soviet Russia, but in 1919 the editor of the pro-Bolshevik magazine, *Liberator*, was the most celebrated radical writer in the United States. Gumberg hoped Eastman could either change Reed's attitude or submit findings on Reed's accusations to Martens, the unrecognized representative for George Chicherin and the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Gumberg invited Eastman to dine at the Brevoort Hotel, a Bohemian-style establishment in Greenwich Village with bankers' prices. Robins accompanied him and together they spent an evening outlining to Eastman Gumberg's work in Russia. As a result, Eastman agreed to attempt conciliation. He arranged an appointment in his office where the antagonists could confront each other. Gumberg arrived first. When Reed entered Eastman's office, his uncontrollable rage burst forth on sighting Gumberg. He shouted to Eastman that he would not "talk to that counter-revolutionary son of a bitch." Since Reed's outburst ended any hope of terminating the feud, Gumberg prevailed on Eastman to write an account of his mediation attempt to Martens. Eastman admitted his inability to bring the pair together, but also pointed out that Gumberg possessed papers documenting his aid for the peoples of Soviet Russia. As to Gumberg's alleged counter-revolutionary activities, Eastman stated that Reed provided no witnesses or documents and "Jack never convinced me of his assertion." Martens's reaction to the Eastman memorandum is unknown. Subsequently Reed left for Russia where he died of typhus. Martens, under investigation by the New York State legislature and the United States Senate, had been ordered deported by the Labor Department following disclosures that the Soviet representative gave aid to the American Communist movement. Gumberg seemed not to have effectively bridged the suspicions caused by Reed until he formed a lengthy association with Boris E.

Skvirsky, later director of the semiofficial Soviet Union Information Bureau in Washington.⁷

Despite engendering the suspicions of Soviet sympathizers and his own government, Gumberg tried to help correct the popular press's frequently negative account of Russia's revolution. Albert Rhys Williams first helped Gumberg gain access to those periodicals most likely to value his knowledge. In November 1918 Williams recommended Gumberg to Harold Stearns, associate editor of the liberal journal *Dial*. At the time Stearns planned a special issue on Russia to be published in January 1919 and asked Gumberg to advise and assist him in its preparation. Gumberg's modest contribution consisted of translating one of Lenin's speeches and reviewing for accuracy several articles considered for publication. These rather inauspicious beginnings enhanced Gumberg's reputation. Before long specialty publications, such as *Asia*, sought and used his expertise to criticize manuscripts and answer questions concerning Russian affairs.⁸

Gumberg established a more fruitful relation with William Hard, a friend of Robins and a free-lance correspondent. Robins advised Hard to talk with Gumberg in May 1919 when the journalist researched a series of six articles for the *New Republic* on anti-bolshevism in America. Gumberg counseled Hard for these articles and for his biography of Robins. The *New Republic* series focused on the role of Bakhmetev and the clique supporting the Russian embassy's anti-Bolshevik propaganda machine in America.⁹

Nearly two years after the Kerensky regime ceased to exist, the United States government continued to accept its representative as ambassador. Since the Wilson administration refused to recognize Soviet Russia or the several counterrevolutionary regimes in Russia then carrying on a civil war against the Red Army, the Russian embassy in Washington had the peculiar distinction of being both the official embassy and capital of Russia.

Hard castigated Bakhmetev's ties to the Russian Information Bureau in New York. The bureau's organ, *Struggling Russia*, not only called for America's recognition of the anti-Bolshevik Omsk regime in Siberia led by Admiral Alexander Kolchak but also fed anti-Soviet materials to American publicists. John Spargo, sometime socialist, President Wilson's ardent supporter, and author of

Bolshevism: The Enemy of Political and Industrial Democracy, relied on translations of Soviet documents by the Russian Information Bureau. Since Spargo used Soviet sources, his book seemed particularly damning.¹⁰

Gumberg enabled Hard to discredit both Spargo and the Russian Information Bureau. Spargo had cited an article in *Izvestia* (July 28, 1918) which purportedly showed that Soviet Russia imposed severe punishments, such as floggings and lynchings, for petty larceny. Gumberg retranslated the same article, demonstrating that the Russian Information Bureau had neglected to give Spargo the headline and introductory sentence which described lynchings and floggings in the town of Loupia as a nightmare. Nor did the bureau give Spargo *Izvestia's* terse, single-word editorial comment, "horrible," at the conclusion of the story.¹¹ In short, the article had been published to condemn, not to condone, floggings.

Collaboration with Hard in the *New Republic* articles opened other avenues for Gumberg's campaign to rectify the one-sided view of Russia projected in America in the era of the Red Scare. In August 1919 Hard brought Gumberg to the attention of James G. McDonald, chairman of the Executive Committee of the League of Free Nations Association. Formed in 1918 out of the old League to Enforce Peace, the League of Free Nations Association contained among its members the elite of American progressive thinkers, including the *New Republic's* Herbert Croly, historians Charles and Mary Beard, editor William Allen White, educational philosopher John Dewey, and labor economist John R. Commons. The association advocated a League of Nations in 1918 but only on condition that such a league uphold liberal concepts of free trade, free seas, and a bill of rights for all countries.¹²

By late summer 1919 many liberal journals such as the *Dial* and the *New Republic* as well as the League of Free Nations turned against President Wilson and the Versailles Peace Treaty. Liberal disaffection mounted with each critical article penned by the *New Republic's* Walter Lippmann and Walter Weyl who covered the Paris conference. The two correspondents exposed European hypocrisy and concluded that Europe planned to maintain peace through old-fashioned force and power politics. In addition, President Wilson's Russian policy sparked liberal outrage and widened the

breach separating Wilson from his former supporters. The League of Free Nations hoped for free trade; yet the Allied powers clamped an embargo on goods going to Soviet Russia. While the United States did not officially join the embargo, the government did nothing to open trade. By February 1918 a State Department-controlled licensing system restricted Russian-American trade. Furthermore, America's Russian intervention enflamed criticism, including congressional complaints from Robins's political friends, Senators Robert La Follette, Hiram Johnson, and William E. Borah. Finally, William C. Bullitt punctuated liberal disillusionment when he delivered his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chaired by President Wilson's steadfast foe Henry Cabot Lodge in September 1919.¹³

Bullitt, sent that spring from Paris to Moscow as an Allied emissary, reported his views on Wilson's Russian policy. Bullitt revealed that Wilson and the Allies had ignored Soviet Russia's seemingly reasonable seven-point program to end the embargo, intervention, and civil war. The emissary had returned to Paris in the midst of a colossal row between Wilson and the French over the fate of the Saar at the peace conference. Also, White forces appeared to be winning the Russian Civil War and there seemed to be no compelling reason to placate the Soviet government. Finally, Communists assumed power briefly in Hungary adding credence to the prevalent fear that Bolsheviks might be able to fulfill their promise of staging an international class revolution.¹⁴

When the League of Free Nations Association decided to underwrite the publication of a documentary source book on Russian-American relations from 1917, they chose as one of the two editors Walter W. Pettit who had accompanied Bullitt on his quest for peace in March 1919. Gumberg received Hard's endorsement to be employed as an adviser on the volume being prepared by Pettit and Caroline K. Cumming. Robins also urged that McDonald use Gumberg on the project.¹⁵

Over the winter of 1919–1920, Gumberg worked closely with Pettit and Cumming, providing translations and suggesting materials for the book. Although a paid consultant, Gumberg received the grateful appreciation of the League of Free Nations' Executive Committee which praised his "invaluable assistance in getting the

Russian volume ready for press" and his "painstaking and conscientious effort to make this volume an impartial and invaluable source for those who wish to study Russian-American relations." The 1920 publication of *American-Russian Relations, March 1917–March 1920*, marked the advent of a pioneer effort to provide a factual documentary account of Soviet-American relations before archival records of the era would be available to the general public. For Gumberg's subsequent career the project had great personal significance as it broadened his contacts with important opinion-makers.¹⁶

The acquaintances and friends Gumberg made over the years, political and literary figures on all points of the ideological spectrum, bear witness to his astounding ability to ingratiate himself with widely divergent groups and individuals. In the 1930s Gumberg capitalized on his connections with various writers and periodicals as a well-paid Wall Street public relations expert. Yet Joseph Freeman, an editor of the Communist-supported *New Masses*, treasured the advice of the ideologically skeptical Gumberg.¹⁷

In 1919 a less incongruous relationship formed between Gumberg and a fellow maverick, Upton Beall Sinclair. Gumberg apparently met Sinclair for the first time in August 1919 shortly before he undertook the assignment with the League of Free Nations Association. Their meeting resulted from Gumberg's marriage to the former Emma Frances Adams, known to all her friends simply as Frankie. Robins witnessed their New York wedding on May 27, 1919, and had been indirectly involved in their courtship. Gumberg had met Frankie through Robins's wife, Margaret. Adams directed one of the New York affiliates of the National Women's Trade Union League. Member of the famed and historic Adams family, she was not only attractive, talented in music and horsemanship, but also, long before the term became current, liberated. Their marriage, barren of children, seems to have been cemented by the peculiar mixture of immigrant and patrician. They thrived on their differences. While the marriage could never be considered one of the great love affairs of history, the constancy and concern each brought to the other's life was admirable if not touching. Gumberg "had a way with her, as with others, but her consciousness of being an ADAMS asserted itself once her Russian-Jew hus-

band was dead." After 1939 Frankie infuriated Robins by reverting to her maiden name, but for twenty years she supported Alexander and polished some of the jagged edges of her immigrant husband. In the summer of 1919 the newlyweds traveled to Monrovia, California, where Frankie introduced her new husband to family and friends, including Upton Sinclair.¹⁸

The oddity of a founder of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society and the author of the famed muckraking work, *The Jungle*, hobnobbing among old and prestigious families was more apparent than real. Sinclair came from a long line of Baltimore aristocrats who served with distinction as officers in the United States Navy. By Sinclair's own admission he thrived in high society and his novels proved effective in contrasting social classes, drawing characterizations of the worlds of the rich and the poor, and dwelling on the conflict between the two. Although remembered for his activities on behalf of economic and social reform, Sinclair shared Gumberg's detachment from firm ideological commitments. When the United States entered the war in April 1917, Sinclair made a moral judgment in favor of America's participation. He became an important supporter of the Wilson administration while most of his socialist colleagues took an antiwar position, and published a small prowar socialist magazine, *Upton Sinclair's*.¹⁹

The issues of Russia and American civil liberties, however, brought him to loggerheads with the government within a year. In the spring of 1918 the federal government brought to trial the radical periodical *Masses* for its antiwar and pro-Bolshevik content. When John Reed and Max Eastman became involved as defendants, Sinclair was incensed. He had spent a year and his own money to organize and publish a socialist magazine extolling the war for democracy in Europe only to discover democracy subverted in America. Sinclair lashed out at this effort to suppress domestic dissent, but his final break with the Wilson administration occurred over Russia. Before merging his small journal with Emmanuel Haldeman-Julius's socialist weekly, *Appeal to Reason*, Sinclair began a serialized novel, later published as a book, *Jimmie Higgins: A Story*. Sinclair's volume, reflecting the changing moods of the author toward the war, concluded with an attack on America's Russian intervention.²⁰

During Gumberg's month-long sojourn in California in 1919, he and Sinclair spent a great deal of time together discussing Russia and the anti-Soviet campaign in the American press. Shortly before Gumberg's arrival, *Appeal to Reason* ran a front-page story on "How America Refused Lenin's Call for Aid." The story outlined the Soviet government's March 1918 initiatives to garner American aid in the face of German aggression. In the earlier merger agreement between *Upton Sinclair's* and *Appeal to Reason*, Sinclair received a full page of his own for editorial comments. During and shortly after Gumberg's visit, Sinclair's page, with such headings as "War on Russia" and "Russia—Pro and Con," reflected a high degree of concern with intervention and the press attacks against Soviet Russia. In preparing these editorials Sinclair had relied upon Gumberg's knowledge for background material.²¹

Although still on his honeymoon, Gumberg agreed to read Sinclair's manuscript *The Brass Check*, a work of nonfiction which laid bare the distortion of news surrounding social justice battles which had engaged Sinclair's attention over the years. As the title suggested, Sinclair believed the American press had prostituted itself to the shrine of capitalism. Gumberg contributed his thoughts on Melville Stone and read Sinclair's chapter entitled "The Case of Russia." Specifically, Sinclair queried Gumberg about Soviet author Maxim Gorky, translating the names of Soviet newspapers and the transition of monarchist to revolutionary newspapers, czarist spy Eugene Azev, and Melville Stone's reception of a decoration from Czar Nicholas II. Gumberg advised Sinclair on the Russian chapter which reviled the capitalist press for lies and distortions concerning such topics as Bolshevik atrocities in the civil war and the ridiculous stories on the Soviet nationalization of women.²²

Early in September 1919 the Gumbergs left California by train for their new apartment off Union Square in New York. Gumberg then devoted considerable time to the Cumming and Pettit volume on Soviet-American relations. That particular book, though, did not satisfy his desire to place before the American public those sources he had collected in Russia on the revolution and on the new Soviet government. G. G. Wyant of Yale University Press had

written earlier to Gumberg and expressed interest in publishing a "Source Book on the Russian Revolution" based upon the Gumberg archives. Wyant learned of the Gumberg collection from the *New Republic's* Herbert Croly.²³

The unsolicited inquiry from Yale elevated Gumberg's spirit and offered the prospect of fulfilling a year-long dream. As soon as his California honeymoon ended, he began a series of negotiations with George Parmly Day, editor of Yale University Press, concerning the projected publication of a two-volume source book. Their discussions proceeded to the selection of an editor, either Edward A. Ross or Archibald Coolidge. Coolidge, earlier appointed as one of three historians by the National Board for Historical Research to investigate the Sisson documents, had refused to attest to their authenticity. His colleagues, J. Franklin Jameson, editor of the *American Historical Review*, and Samuel N. Harper of the University of Chicago, after undergoing heavy pressure from the Wilson administration and much to their later embarrassment, sanctioned the collection of forgeries. Obviously Coolidge possessed integrity, but Gumberg's repeated pleas with Day to place him in contact with the historian went unheeded. After protracted talks and correspondence, Day finally informed Gumberg in November that members of the Committee on Publications of Yale University had individually and quietly informed Day that they would not approve the publication of the proposed book should the subject be formally raised at one of the committee's meetings.²⁴

Very suddenly Gumberg discovered he had neither an editor nor a publisher and yet boxes of documents cluttered his new apartment. Immediately he and the former members of the Red Cross Commission took action to preserve and publish the material. In July 1919 Avrahm Yarmolinsky, representative for the New York Public Library had asked Gumberg to deposit his archives with that institution. The hope of publishing the materials prevented Gumberg from turning his documents over to the library at that time. However, after termination of the negotiations with Yale University Press, he had his lawyer and former associate on the Red Cross Commission, Thomas Thacher, arrange for the deposit of his books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, and other

documents with the New York Public Library. The agreement, completed between December 2 and 4, 1919, kept the archives closed until Gumberg finished his examination of the contents. In return for the accession of these valuable sources on Russia, the library made available to Gumberg and his assistants a special study room which became his office for the next year.²⁵

During these 1919 negotiations Gumberg and Thacher kept Robins abreast of developments. After Robins had been asked that spring to testify on Bolshevik propaganda before a committee of the United States Senate, he no longer felt enjoined to remain silent about Russia. Robins began a flurry of speaking engagements and political maneuvers seeking to alter American foreign policy but resulting in his complete physical and mental collapse in the spring of 1921.

In December 1919, though, Robins was hale, hearty, and exhibiting his forensic talents before the student body of the University of Wisconsin. When he learned from Gumberg and Thacher that Yale University Press decided not to publish the source book, Robins agreed that former members of the Red Cross Commission should underwrite the publication of a historical summary of those documents in the hands of Gumberg and other members of the commission. At Wisconsin, Robins made an appointment to see Edward A. Ross. When Robins and Ross completed their talks, the famed pioneer in sociology agreed to become the project's editor-in-chief. Ross also agreed to contact his publisher, Century Company, about printing the proposed two-volume study of Soviet Russia. The sociologist made appropriate arrangements with the University of Wisconsin to take an early sabbatical in the fall of 1920 to begin preparing the volumes.²⁶

Although known primarily as an author and scholar in the fields of economics and sociology, Ross held a special interest in Russian social processes. In 1917 the American Institute of Social Service sponsored his research trip to study Russia's revolution. His findings appeared the following year in a book entitled *Russia in Upheaval*. Associated with many of the same Progressive personalities known to Robins, Ross also had met Gumberg. Two years earlier, in December 1917, Gumberg had accompanied Ross

on a visit to a government-owned worker-managed munitions plant at Sestroretsk, ten miles outside Petrograd. Through correspondence Robins arranged a New York meeting between himself, Gumberg, Ross, Thacher, and Wardwell at the Bankers Club on February 2, 1920. The two-hour conference produced an elaborate agreement in which the former members of the Red Cross Commission decided to publish a "factual," "objective," and noncontroversial account of Soviet Russia but which undoubtedly was designed to uphold the commission's sympathetic regard for the Soviet experiment and neutralize the voluminous material then being published against Russia. The Red Cross group subsequently asked Ross to avoid all acknowledgment as to the source of funds and documents for the books. Nevertheless, Robins, Thacher, and Wardwell each subscribed \$2,000 to pay the salaries of Ross and Gumberg. Gumberg indexed and translated the Russian material for Ross and collaborated closely with him in collating the sources for *The Russian Bolshevik Revolution* and *The Russian Soviet Republic*.²⁷

The volumes produced no dramatic change in the predominately anti-Soviet views held by the majority of the American people. However, Ross and his associates presented, in 1921 and 1923, a reasonably factual, critically sympathetic account of Bolshevik Russia; it was solidly documented and written by a reputable scholar widely acclaimed for his insight into social behavior. In the words of Ross, he offered the study "on the theory that intelligent people are tired of being the victims of propaganda about Russia." He found the "key to the Russian Revolution" to be a "reaction against the unbearable," and he stressed the heavy responsibility czarist Russia bore for the radical turn of events of the twentieth century.²⁸ The first volume chronicled Russia's revolutionary year, 1917. In the second, Ross carried his narrative to 1921 and emphasized such themes as the beneficial American Red Cross role and the harmful effect intervention had on Russia. The concluding chapters offered a series of vignettes on Soviet life, extremely critical of Communist ideology, yet designed to dispel the hysterical view of Bolsheviks as oversexed, bomb-throwing anarchists who enjoyed the sight of blood. In short, the books presented to the intelligent reading public an alternative view of Soviet Russia—

understanding, even accepting, Russian events without the wild moral condemnation so frequently expressed in the popular press.

The year Gumberg devoted to this grand project produced other dividends. In his work at the New York Public Library, he employed the services of a stenographer, but he also had assistance in refining his translations from a young writer, William Henry Chamberlin. Chamberlin impressed Gumberg during the course of their endeavors, so much so, that Gumberg later loaned him six hundred dollars to finance a trip to Europe and Russia. Their relationship redounded to their mutual advantage. Chamberlin wrote lengthy letters to Gumberg providing up-to-date information on Russia and Gumberg helped place Chamberlin's articles on Russia in American periodicals; he even checked galley proofs until Chamberlin became a correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*. Chamberlin's lengthy stay in Russia eventually led to the publication of a classic two-volume study, *The Russian Revolution*. In one of those recurrent twists of fate Chamberlin in the 1930s became progressively disenchanted with the Soviet Union. In 1923, though, he wrote Gumberg: "My greatest grief is the thought that some day, after I have spent every cent I can earn or borrow, I will have to go back [to the United States]. For a man like yourself, who could certainly land a good job, Russia should be an infinitely preferable place to live." Chamberlin suggested not only that Gumberg leave America but that he should join the Communist party. To this Gumberg replied: "I . . . went through the revolution in 1917 unscathed, there is not much chance of my becoming a convert at this late hour. And frankly I have seen so many of the post 1917 bolsheviks [*sic*], that I have no desire to look like them. I prefer to remain a free lance, a sympathetic bystander and well wisher."²⁹

In the two years following his return from Russia, Gumberg retained his independence. Undergoing the enormous strain of being a Russian-American during the period of the Red Scare, he managed to maintain his sense of humor, to preserve his nonideological stance, and to resist the temptation to return to Russia where his talents would undoubtedly have received greater appreciation. Gumberg overcame harassment from American governmental agencies, separation from his employment with the Pet-

rograd Telegraph Agency and from semiofficial Soviet groups by the slanders of John Reed, to work diligently with important publicists and institutions to improve the climate of opinion in America toward Soviet Russia. The measure of his success would be impossible to gauge except in the end product of important articles and books published with Gumberg's aid. In the early 1920s Gumberg combined this role, as an unobtrusive publicist, with a political role in order to try to gain the recognition of Soviet Russia by the United States.

5

PASSING THE TORCH



ALEXANDER GUMBERG NEVER gained fame as a literary figure. Through the years his English improved considerably and he died in the midst of a public relations career with an investment firm, Atlas Corporation. By 1939 he wrote refined prose in the best Wall Street tradition. He always possessed, however, a genuine talent for relaying information through personal contact. At a glance Gumberg seemed poorly suited for the path he cut for himself—a mediator between two societies. A childhood disease impaired the normal function of a leg, and when combined with overly long arms, the slight limp made him ungainly. More than one person who knew him reflected on his primeval appearance, formidable, if not frightening.¹ Those who met and chatted with him, though, soon forgot his physical impairment. His pleasant, handsome face, his quiet but quick cadence of speech, eliciting thoughts terse and prescient with a touch of cynical humor, pleased most of his contemporaries. Gumberg rarely demonstrated anger or vindictiveness, save toward John Reed. His even-tempered personality and ability made him a natural reconciler between the worlds of capitalism and communism.

From June 1918 to March 1921 Gumberg devoted most of his energy to correcting the lopsided Russian picture painted by the American press. Meanwhile his friend Raymond Robins worked indefatigably to gain Republican support for their views on Russia. During these three years Robins coordinated the Russian cause almost singlehandedly. Then suddenly in the spring and summer of

1921 two events conspired to vault Gumberg into the political arena. Robins left the scene temporarily, passing the torch of his campaign to his former secretary, and second, Russia suffered famine. Gumberg, through his associations with liberal journalists, spearheaded a relief agency and as Robins's heir tried to soften the stridently anti-Bolshevik views of the Harding administration.

After Robins, William Boyce Thompson, and Thomas Thacher failed in the summer of 1918 to talk Woodrow Wilson out of an interventionist policy, Robins convinced himself that any fundamental change in America's Russian policy required a Republican Congress and president. In September, two months after President Wilson decided to join the Allies in sending troops to Russia, Robins asked Thompson to meet Will Hays, chairman of the Republican congressional campaign of 1918, and Fred Upham, treasurer of the Republican party. Thompson agreed to contribute several hundred thousand dollars in the successful venture to gain a Republican victory in the fall elections. The magnate later became chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the Republican party with the special task of raising money for the 1920 presidential campaign. While he exercised political clout through his millionaire associate, Robins carefully cultivated the dissident Republican Senators Robert La Follette, William E. Borah, and Hiram Johnson. The latter introduced a resolution on December 2, 1918, calling on the secretary of state to clarify the purpose of America's intervention in Russia.² Within six months American troops left north Russia, and a little over a year after Johnson and his colleagues began to question the intervention policy, the United States troops withdrew from Siberia. Intervention had been a debacle. Weakly defended by the Wilson administration, the policy had been widely criticized by those who, in the general atmosphere of retrenchment following the conclusion of the First World War, desired to have American soldiers returned home. As early as February 1919, a measure calling for the withdrawal of American forces found the Senate evenly divided and failed by the tie-breaking vote of Vice President Thomas Marshall.³

Robins made his contribution to the pressure against President Wilson. His stratagems, though, were dwarfed by the force of events which actually dictated the reversal of American foreign pol-

icy. The avowed mission of United States troops in Russia had been to protect Czechoslovakian forces and the residue of Allied supplies from the Germans. The end of war only too quickly destroyed rationalizations supporting use of Allied armies in Russia. The unpublicized reasons for American military participation in Siberia and north Russia, i.e., limitation of Japanese expansion and circumspect assistance to anti-Bolshevik governments, also evaporated. At the outset, Japanese forces entered Siberia in sufficient strength to make America's 12,000 troops insignificant in comparison. Furthermore, the brilliant and frequently brutal Commissar of War Leon Trotsky led the Red Army to victory after victory against several White Russian armies. By March 1919 Red forces began probing into north Russia where there existed neither Czechs, supplies, nor Germans. After part of the 339th United States Infantry mutinied, American troops departed from Archangel in May 1919 but not before suffering over 500 casualties. United States forces in Siberia were spared a direct confrontation with the Red Army by the presence of 100,000 Japanese soldiers and Soviet Russia's recognition of a makeshift country, the Far Eastern Republic. Originally part of Soviet Russia as the Far Eastern Council of Commissars headed by Alexander Krasnoshchekov, the Soviet command on January 18, 1920, decided to recognize the council as a buffer government which might provide the Red Army a means of avoiding engaging Japan, Britain, Italy, France, and the United States in a major war to regain Russian territory east of Lake Baikal. Thus America's Siberian troops could withdraw relatively peacefully between February and April 1920.⁴

While Robins found strong public sympathy against the use of American troops in far-flung corners of the earth, he discovered little support for any of his positive statements about the Soviet government. The Red Scare revealed that, although Americans would not uphold an adventurist policy in Soviet Russia, fighting Communists at home was an entirely different matter. Few Americans advocated any change in the nonrecognition policy. This policy was outlined on August 10, 1920, when Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby issued a note to the Italian ambassador, Baron Avezzano. Entering into informal discussions with Soviet Russia, Italy had requested a statement of America's position. Colby's response,

based on the thoughts of anti-Bolshevik publicist John Spargo, became a keystone in America's foreign policy toward Russia until 1933. Reflecting the contemporary American opinion of Bolsheviks as anarchists, Colby denied Russia recognition, not because of ideology, but because the Communist regime lacked "every principle of honor and good faith and every usage and convention underlying the whole structure of international law."⁵

Robins made a fundamental error in his political thinking. He blamed Democrats for nonrecognition and assumed a Republican-controlled presidency and Congress would reopen the Russian question, if only to repudiate Woodrow Wilson. While Gumberg worked assiduously with Edward A. Ross on the Russian books throughout 1920, Robins pursued this political chimera. At the Republican National Convention of 1920, Robins hoped to secure the selection of Hiram Johnson as the party's nominee. When Senator Warren G. Harding emerged the victor, both Johnson and Robins pledged their support to the Ohioan in return for Harding's promise to reconsider President Wilson's Russian policy.⁶

Robins campaigned strenuously for the Republican ticket. After Harding's victory there was talk he would receive an appointment as secretary of labor. Robins, however, refused to consider any cabinet post unless paired with Thompson. Thompson did become a member of a mission sent to Peru to help celebrate that country's century of independence.⁷ The appointment typified the political crumbs tossed to the Robins-Johnson-Borah wing of the Republican party. The pro-Russian Robins group lost the battle for control of Harding and the Republican party.

By the time Harding's cabinet appointees indicated the anti-Soviet nature of the new administration, Robins had been forced to vacate the political scene entirely. For a year after he appeared before a committee of the United States Senate, Robins had delivered speeches on Russia almost daily across the country. Then came the Republican convention and further tours and speeches for the Republican presidential nominee. In the year and a half of strenuous travel, speeches, and politics, Robins had exhausted himself mentally and physically. He had already suffered a partial stroke during the presidential campaign. His bitterness and frustration over Harding's cabinet selections, particularly Secretary of State Charles

Evans Hughes and Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, little improved his spirit.⁸ Finally, in February 1921 he had a severe breakdown which incapacitated him for much of the remainder of the year and confined him to his beloved home at Chinsegut Hill, Florida.

As February passed to March 1921, it had become obvious to Robins that his health would require months of recuperation. He could write or think only with great difficulty and enjoined Gumberg to carry on the struggle. "In your hands," Robins told his former secretary, "my poor attempts are safe."⁹ Gumberg filled the void left by Robins's illness.

At the outset Gumberg aspired to collect some of the people favorable to Russia, particularly Thacher, Allen Wardwell, and Walter Pettit, into an unofficial group to induce the new Republican secretary of state to trade with Russia. As Robins told Gumberg, surely Hughes could be made to "realize the folly of following a me-to [*sic*] policy after Woodrow Wilson." Although wartime trade impediments had been removed at the time of Harding's inauguration, the State, Treasury and Commerce departments restricted Soviet mail, gold, securities, and long-term loans.¹⁰

Before Gumberg organized his pressure group, two events shattered his goal. Harding had promised the pro-Russian wing of the Republican party that his inaugural message would advocate lifting all restrictions on Soviet-American trade. With Robins safely out of the way in Florida, however, the new president surrendered to Hoover and Hughes. His Inaugural Address dashed Gumberg's hopes. In the main Harding elicited foreign policy statements filled with generalities and platitudes. "We recognize the new order in the world," stated Harding, "with the closer contacts which progress has wrought. We sense the call of the human heart for fellowship, fraternity, and cooperation."¹¹

Within three weeks Hoover and Hughes revealed that the new administration excluded Russia from Harding's "call of the human heart." The Soviet government made a plea for the normalization of Russian-American trade on March 22, 1921. It assumed that the end of the Wilson presidency marked the termination of hostility toward Russia. Parroting a statement issued by Hoover three days earlier, Hughes replied on March 25. Hughes found no proper

basis for considering trade relations until the Russian government protected life, property, and labor. The new administration adhered to the stereotype of a Russia governed by bomb-throwing anarchists, although Lenin, seventeen days earlier, had reinstated capitalism through his New Economic Policy and nine days earlier Great Britain had signed an Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement. The new Republican regime's single concession restored postal service between America and Russia in May 1921.¹²

Undoubtedly Gumberg concluded in March and April that the best method of keeping the Russian issue alive was to gather sympathetic support for Russian trade among Republicans in Congress. He established an alliance with Senator Joseph I. France of Maryland. Together they discussed the possibility of a trip to Russia to investigate the situation there and report their findings to Congress and the American people. Gumberg's excitement mounted as he looked forward to returning to Russia in the summer of 1921 as France's secretary and interpreter. On May 24 the senator embarked for Russia aboard the *Aquitania*—without Gumberg. Despite the personal pleas of France, the State Department refused to assure Gumberg's readmittance to America.¹³

Until the State Department regularized visa procedures in May 1925, Gumberg dared not leave the country. For several years he battled with the State Department over its regulations. The Russian-American did not have to suffer from paranoia to realize that high administration officials considered his continued residence in America undesirable. After one of these confrontations with the State Department, Robins confided to Gumberg, "You are the one man that the Counter-Revolution wants out of America." Robins advised his friend never to leave the country unless he went on an official government mission, recognition had been achieved, or, ultimately, Gumberg determined that a prolonged stay in Russia would benefit Soviet-American relations.¹⁴

Although he had suffered a personal setback, Gumberg could take some consolation from Century Company's announcement in June 1921 of the publication of Ross's book *The Russian Bolshevik Revolution*. Gumberg had diligently translated and made available to Ross so much material that the Wisconsin sociologist had been able to complete several chapters of the succeeding volume before

the first one arrived at the bookstores. In celebration of the event the Gumbers accepted Kenneth Durant's invitation to spend a brief vacation at his camp in the Adirondacks.¹⁵ On their return to New York, however, Russia's famine tragically emphasized dismal Soviet-American relations.

Anna J. Haines, representative of the American Friends' Service Committee in the Volga River region, reported to the Philadelphia office that from October 1920 to June 1921, when fourteen inches of rain was the norm, only two and one-half inches of rain fell in Russia's grain basket. The worst of the disaster occurred in the grain-growing months of April, May, and June 1921, when the Volga basin received only three-tenths of an inch of rain.¹⁶ Before the famed Soviet author Maxim Gorky made his plea for American assistance, Gumberg had been following the grain condition in the Soviet press and reporting the drought conditions to his slowly recovering friend Raymond Robins.

The American press speculated that this new disaster would or should cause the collapse of the Soviet government. Keeping Robins abreast of the new situation in July, Gumberg argued against such conjecture. Concerned only with saving Russian lives, not Marxist ideology, Gumberg wrote Robins that if the present regime collapsed it "would mean hell and anarchy for a generation." The starving people of Russia would be the ultimate losers. He suggested the establishment of a relief agency independent of the American government. So suspicious had he become of the Hoover-Hughes axis within the Harding administration, that he dismissed entirely, and erroneously, the idea that Hoover, as director general of the American Relief Administration, would provide timely or sufficient help. His fears of Hoover's intent were entirely justified, for in 1919 Hoover had suggested that President Wilson use relief agencies to undermine and destroy communism in Russia and Hungary. Gumberg proposed the establishment of a separate organization to seek funds from Russian immigrants, labor unions, benevolent businessmen, church leaders, women's clubs, "liberals and their press," and "from the plain people who will not turn down a starving man." While Gumberg knew that Robins would not be well enough to lead the new cause, he sought and secured Robins's endorsement for a relief program.¹⁷

Robins wished he could do more—he had recovered partially from his breakdown but continued to suffer from internal hemorrhaging and insomnia. The Russian sympathizers turned to the liberal press for assistance. The pleas and reports of Anna Haines and the Quakers already had had an effect, and through Robert Morss Lovett of the *New Republic*, Gumberg and Robins spurred on the formation of a committee for Russian relief. Lovett urged Robins to assume the chairmanship but he was prevented by his health from accepting the responsibility. Robins thought several individuals, especially Norman Hapgood and Gifford Pinchot, would make an excellent coordinator for the relief campaign. Gumberg, though, stuck to his original choices of either Thacher or Wardwell.¹⁸

When the Russian Famine Fund finally began its operation on October 13, 1921, Gumberg's ideas prevailed; Wardwell led the executive committee. In his discussions and correspondence with Lovett, Gumberg commended the use of Wardwell not only because the former Red Cross Commission major had special knowledge of Russia but because he had "largely escaped personal attack and abuse, while maintaining with unswerving fidelity his support of a rational policy for the solution of Russian problems." To Gumberg the recent Red Scare made it necessary for the committee to have a relatively untainted but sympathetic chairman. Wardwell proved an excellent choice. Within a few months the fund was organized nationwide and collected subscriptions in twenty-nine states. It raised \$214,681.66, an amazing sum considering the economic straits experienced by the United States and the subsequent congressional appropriation for Russian aid.¹⁹

The diverse membership of the executive and national committees of the Russian Famine Fund reflected Gumberg's original concept as to who should be reached by such a national group. United for humanitarian purposes were leaders from religion, business, labor, journalism, and women's groups, many of whom Gumberg had met or had worked with over the previous several years: Wardwell, Lovett, Thacher, Robins, France, Thompson, Pettit, James G. McDonald, and Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of the *Nation*. The fund also welcomed those critics of Soviet Russia who, nonetheless, maintained sympathies for the Russian people in their hour of need: Samuel Gompers, David R. Francis, and

Cyrus McCormick, among others. Monies collected by the fund purchased food for distribution in Russia through the American Friends' Service Committee. By March 1922 the Quakers were feeding nearly 100,000 Russians in the worst drought-stricken area near the city of Buzuluk, 150 miles east of the Volga River. The fund gave the largest single donation to this special Quaker project, whose contributors included the Joint Distribution Committee (Jewish), American Red Cross, and the American Relief Administration.²⁰

Although the fund followed closely Gumberg's conception of a relief organization, the New Yorker miscalculated the official response of the United States government to the Russian disaster. The Hoover-Hughes statements and Gumberg's visa problems caused him and Robins to doubt that the Harding administration might render assistance. When it became obvious the American government would pursue a charitable policy, the Russian sympathizers retained a high degree of suspicion of the real motives of Hoover throughout the entire relief episode to its conclusion in July 1923.²¹

Herbert Hoover, director general of the American Relief Administration, replied to Maxim Gorky's July plea by promising aid on condition that all Americans then incarcerated in Soviet jails be released. Five days later, on July 30, 1921, Senator France arrived in Riga after a month-long sojourn in Russia, bringing with him Soviet Russia's positive response to Hoover's condition for aid. As an act of good faith the Bolsheviks released to France's care one of the American prisoners, Margaret C. Harrison, a journalist for the *Baltimore Sun*. Harrison, a chain-smoker, listed only one complaint against her Soviet captors—the lack of cigarettes.²²

Hoover fulfilled his part of the bargain quickly. In August the European director of the American Relief Administration, Walter L. Brown, met Soviet diplomat Maxim Litvinov at Riga and negotiated a relief agreement. Later in London, Brown signed another document permitting the Soviet government to transfer \$12.2 million worth of gold to the United States.²³ For budgetary purposes, this Russian gold was absorbed as part of the American relief effort. Paradoxically, Russia contributed 20 percent of Ameri-

can aid and in a manner contrary to the official United States policy toward Russian gold.

Gumberg recognized the charitable impulse of the American people, although he had doubted that of the leaders. Congress verified his insight when it passed "An Act for the Relief of the Distressed and Starving People of Russia." President Harding signed it into law on December 24, 1921. The bill authorized the United States Grain Corporation to act as the fiscal agency to expend up to \$20 million on foodstuffs for Russian relief. Colonel William N. Haskell, designated American Relief Administration director for the drought-ridden country, had already left with the first two hundred Americans when Harding issued an executive order proposed by Hoover implementing the congressional legislation. His order fashioned a five-member Purchasing Commission for Russian Relief and included not only Hoover but also Edgar Richard, Edward Flesh, Don Livingston, and James P. Goodrich, who had just completed a term as governor of Indiana.²⁴

Ever wary of Hoover, Gumberg overcame his misgivings about the American Relief Administration (ARA) only after meeting Goodrich, who became a lifelong associate. Circumspectly, Goodrich reintegrated the efforts of Gumberg, Robins, and other Russian sympathizers with those of the Harding administration. Gumberg, whose endeavors to aid Russia between July and December had been directed toward keeping all relief programs out of the hands of Hoover, made his about-face on December 19, 1921. That afternoon he met Goodrich in the Washington hotel suite of Will Hays. It was well known that Goodrich, who had already acted as Hoover's personal representative in the Russian ARA project, would be appointed to a position of influence once Congress approved funds for Russian relief. After a long talk with the former governor, Gumberg immediately communicated with Robins. The ailing protégé of Theodore Roosevelt, then in New York, had recovered sufficiently to resume public life by speaking out in favor of a pet project, peace and disarmament, in connection with the Washington Conference already convened in the nation's capital. Contrary to their earlier discussions, Gumberg told Robins to "use all your influence to back that bill for 20 million for Russian

relief." Gumberg found Goodrich possessed "more intelligence of real human sympathy or understanding about Russia" than anyone he had met, except for Robins. Gumberg's favorable reaction to Goodrich continued the next day when the two met for a second round of talks. As soon as Gumberg departed from Hays's suite he wired Robins and arranged a New York meeting between his new and old friends.²⁵

Subsequent events justified Gumberg's initial confidence in Goodrich. As vice chairman of the Purchasing Commission, he took charge during the frequent absences of its chairman, Herbert Hoover. In the summer of 1922 Goodrich traveled to Russia as the commission's representative, and his reports back to the Harding administration showed not a conversion to bolshevism but a conviction that Communist Russia would evolve into Capitalist Russia. As Goodrich informed Harding: "Economic forces as old as civilization and as enduring as the human race are now at work, and will continue to work until Russian laws and Russian policies correspond to the needs and fulfill the aspirations of the people." Goodrich apparently accepted the New Economic Policy of Soviet Russia as an indication of change away from revolutionary Marxism. He reminded the Harding administration that the restoration of law and order never occurred during, but after, a revolution. Although Goodrich did not expect the United States to write off government and private debts incurred by czarist Russia, he believed the confiscatory policy of Soviet Russia could be negotiated. Once the two governments reached an accord on debts, Goodrich wrote, "then it is my opinion that the surest and safest way to help the Russian people is frankly to recognize the revolution as an accomplished fact, deal with this government as the only possible government in Russia and . . . open up trade relations with them [*sic*] and let American capital flow into Russia and assist in her restoration."²⁶

On the surface, Gumberg's new associate seemed an unlikely supporter of the Russian cause. Goodrich had defeated a Progressive party candidate to be elected Indiana's twenty-ninth governor in 1916. A classmate of Albert J. Beveridge at DePauw University, he became a lawyer in 1887 but devoted little time to law practice. Instead he followed a financially rewarding career developing

holdings in farms, mines, utilities, grain elevators, and banks. The capstone to his entrepreneurial enterprise was achieved the year after his return from Russia when he became president of the National City Bank of Indianapolis. Goodrich, though, was very much a part of the era of Progressivism in which he matured politically. He belonged to the Knights of Labor and as Indiana's governor he reorganized the state government and established a new tax system, highway system, Public Service Commission, and a Department of Conservation. In 1919 he declared war on the coal industry's excessive profits. During the 1920s, when many of his Hoosier Republican cohorts wooed the Ku Klux Klan, Goodrich supported the NAACP's anti-lynching campaign and contributed heavily to Roman Catholic Notre Dame University, although he was an elder of the Presbyterian Church.²⁷ His agricultural holdings influenced his Russian views. As did several politicians of rural states, he concluded that trade with Russia might ameliorate the agricultural depression experienced in America throughout the 1920s.

Gumberg's association with Goodrich immeasurably increased his connections with the Harding administration. It did not, however, lessen his wariness of Hoover or the State Department's suspicion of Gumberg's Bolshevik connections. Gumberg was justified in his jaundiced view of Hoover. The secretary of commerce and administration spokesmen in private and public utterances minimized the need for relief and frequently attacked the relief efforts of agencies not directly connected with Hoover's ARA and the Purchasing Commission. Using as his source of information the memoranda of William J. Burns, director of the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation, Hoover stigmatized non-governmental relief as part of the Communist plot to gain a foothold in America. While numerous groups, such as the Russian Red Cross and the Friends of Soviet Russia, included Communists, Hoover's indiscriminate statements adversely affected the entire private donation effort. The government never raised or answered the fundamental question of whether Communist-inspired agencies used relief funds for purposes other than to feed starving Russians.²⁸

From the very first moment Gumberg met Goodrich, the two

men discussed the possibility of Gumberg's becoming the Hoosier's secretary when the latter went to Russia in the spring. Even though employed by the Special Trade Delegation of the Far Eastern Republic before he knew Goodrich, Gumberg seemed initially to be most eager to quit his post and accompany his new friend to his homeland. However, as his work for the Special Trade Delegation progressed, Gumberg believed he could better promote the improvement of Soviet-American relations by assisting the delegation during the Washington Conference. Gumberg contented himself with briefing Goodrich on the latest available information about Russia.²⁹

By early spring 1922 Gumberg began to have second thoughts about Goodrich's next projected journey. First, his work for the Special Trade Delegation appeared less important once the delegates to the Washington Conference concluded their negotiations in February. Second, Robins through his Republican associates ascertained in April that there was a "real change planned at Washington" in regard to Russia. Robins did not see any dramatic breakthrough for either trade or recognition but a change in attitude, a new flexibility brought about by international events. At the time Robins wrote these observations to Gumberg an economic conference to reconstruct Europe met in Genoa. Soviet Russia's invitation to the conference not only increased the prestige of her revolutionary government but also threatened to leave America out of future Russian trade as Moscow appeared to be reintegrated with the other capitals of Europe. The Genoa Conference achieved little except for the German-Soviet Treaty of Rapallo which normalized trade and diplomatic relations between Europe's two major outcasts.³⁰

Both Gumberg and Robins believed Goodrich might inspire a reappraisal of America's Russian policy. The former governor had easy access to President Harding and might either circumvent the Hoover-Hughes influence by direct talks with the president or change the entire administration view because Goodrich worked so closely with Hoover. After the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo on April 16, 1922, the Goodrich trip to Russia had potential to be more than a journey to determine the effectiveness of the ARA in distributing wheat acquired by the Purchasing Commission. To

Robins, Gumberg wrote that he now wished he could accompany Goodrich, "not so much [for] myself, but because I could have been very useful in healing the breach between America and Russia." Nevertheless, Gumberg concluded, "things never looked as well for the Russian people as they do now, both in Washington and Europe." Recalling his difficulties with the State Department the previous year, Gumberg resigned himself to reading about the Goodrich mission in the American press.³¹

On May 18, 1922, he accompanied Goodrich to New York harbor and the North River waiting room on Pier 56 of the Cunard Steamship Company. At the very last moment before embarking, Goodrich decided he had to have Gumberg with him not only as a secretary and translator but also as an adviser and expeditor. Because it was too late for Gumberg to depart at once, the two decided that they would meet later in Moscow. Gumberg reminded the former governor of his problem in securing a visa the previous spring. Thus Goodrich called Hoover and explained his desire to have Gumberg's assistance. A meeting was arranged between Gumberg and Hoover for Saturday noon, May 20. The two met again the following Monday for a total of two and one-half hours of private conversation.³²

Gumberg later admitted that the meeting "was as good a time as I ever had in any two and half hours of my life." The unequal status between Hoover and Gumberg did not prevent the Russian-American from scoring a few well-aimed blows at the man he considered to embody all those anti-Russian attitudes of the Harding administration. Their conversation was extremely frank. Hoover flatly admitted to Gumberg that he had been informed by numerous members of the administration that Gumberg was a Bolshevik. Although Gumberg hotly contested the charge, Hoover went on to say, " 'I don't give a damn what a man believes so long as I think he can be useful.' " The secretary of commerce told Gumberg he was not really afraid of American Bolsheviks in any event. The example of the mess Soviet Russia presented to the world was enough, the secretary asserted, to limit communism's influence. " 'I am sure,' " Hoover predicted, " 'that five years from today there will be no bolshevism in Russia.' " Since Hoover expressed so little concern about American Communists, Gumberg

asked why it was necessary to attack some of the Russian relief agencies because of their radical leadership. "My suggestion that he leave all the Russian relief organizations alone was as welcome as smallpox," Gumberg later recalled. The Russian-American minimized the danger of those representatives of the Friends of Soviet Russia and the Russian Red Cross and characterized their ineffectiveness by calling them "superboobs." Hoover chuckled over Gumberg's choice of adjective, but when he asked Hoover "about the life ambition that he is supposed to have to eradicate 'Bolshevism' from the earth, I did not get a merry ha ha."³³

By the end of their two-day conversations, Gumberg and Hoover discovered grounds for substantial agreement upon the greatness of Lenin, the Russian need for a strong government, and Gumberg's departure to Russia to assist Goodrich in conversing with Kremlin leaders. Hoover asked Gumberg to quit his job immediately and go see George Baker, director of ARA's New York headquarters. Arrangements would be made for Gumberg to travel to Russia without delay. Within twenty-four hours Gumberg resigned his post at the Special Trade Delegation of the Far Eastern Republic, joined the ARA, and traveled by train to Baker's New York office off Broadway to wait for the State Department's clearance of his visa. Under the unusual circumstances Gumberg received solicitous care from Baker who treated him "like a whiteheaded boy." Hoover, in fact, called from Washington to make certain Gumberg had been properly processed.³⁴

Despite Hoover's promises, Gumberg's papers still had not been approved two weeks later. After seeking Wardwell's advice Gumberg quit the ARA and took a train back to Washington where he was reinstated in his former position. Gumberg asked Baker to communicate with Goodrich and explain the circumstances. Baker swore to Gumberg that the Russian Division of the State Department had not held up his visa. However, as Gumberg phrased it to a friend, "I have not lost faith in the faithfulness of the visa division to the ghost of Czar Nicholas."³⁵

The State Department later claimed that the delay had resulted from Great Britain's denial of a clearance; however, both Gumberg and Robins continued to doubt the integrity of the State Department.³⁶ What actually occurred in those two weeks to prevent

Gumberg's departure long enough to make him give up his trip may not be known until the State Department visa records become public. Part of the problem may have stemmed from the tremendous bureaucratic friction that existed between the State and Commerce departments. The commerce secretary expanded internationally the power of his department, much to the chagrin of America's diplomatic corps. Also, based on conjecture, there are two excellent reasons why the State Department might encourage a delay in processing Gumberg's papers even though he had the apparent support of the secretary of commerce. The first reason concerns the personnel within the State Department and the second involves Gumberg's activities.

Secretary of State Hughes's public and private statements against Russia received the unqualified endorsement of DeWitt C. Poole, chief of the Russian Affairs Division of the State Department. Poole had been second in command at the Moscow Consulship under Madden Summers in 1917-1918, shared his chief's anti-bolshevism, and was quite aware of Gumberg's sympathies. As head of the Russian Division, Poole had worked closely with the anti-Soviet ambassador, Boris Bakhmetev. While Gumberg encouraged Goodrich to influence President Harding toward a reevaluation of the entire Russian policy, Poole sent Harding memoranda which declared, "We must adhere firmly to the Russian policy expressed . . . in the declaration of March 25, 1921 . . . any change or apparent weakening in our policy now would be disastrous from every point of view." The persistent struggle between Poole and Gumberg to influence Harding knew few bounds. Gumberg participated in a conspiracy to discredit Poole with Harding. One may imagine Poole's reaction to Gumberg's application as it came across his desk in May 1922.³⁷

Aside from the State Department personalities who might wish to thwart Gumberg's travel plans, the principal reason members of the Harding administration held Gumberg in a highly suspicious light lay in the Russian-American's employment. In December 1921 Gumberg joined the Special Trade Delegation of the Far Eastern Republic. This commitment, through employment, to the broader interests of Soviet Russia led individuals such as Hoover to conclude simplistically that Gumberg represented the

Communist International. Sending an alleged Communist to aid in discussion with the Soviet government would not appear to be in the best interests of the United States. Seen in this manner the apparent foot-dragging of the government in clearing the paperwork permitting Gumberg to join Goodrich on the mission was unfortunate but understandable. Gumberg's association with the Special Trade Delegation did not, as administration officials thought, reflect his conversion to bolshevism but rather occurred as part of a larger political maneuver to achieve the recognition of Soviet Russia through the back door.

6

DELEGATIONS AND COMMISSIONS



BY THE TIME Warren G. Harding delivered his Inaugural Address, Alexander Gumberg's Union Square apartment had become the unofficial depository of information about Soviet Russia for numerous radical and liberal journalists. The salon over which Gumberg presided was amiably hosted by his wife, who provided tea in glasses after the Russian fashion. Their many guests around the samovar at various times included Bessie Beatty, Jessica Smith, Albert Rhys Williams, Maurice Hindus, Kenneth Durant, William Henry Chamberlin, William Hard, and Floyd Dell. Many members of this group journeyed to Russia and, upon their return, visited Gumberg's apartment to share impressions with the other interested writers. While Gumberg could not accompany his friends to his homeland he gleaned worthwhile information from their experiences and kept himself abreast of Soviet life. He received infrequent direct communications from his family and had to rely on members of his salon for more detailed news. He learned that his father, then residing in Kharkov, acquired monies he had sent. Veniamin had been reconciled with the Communist party and engaged in a promising business career. Zorin lived in a modest apartment within the Kremlin. A troubleshooter for the Soviet government, he spent weeks away from Moscow but had time to put a good word in with the Bolshevik leadership for his capitalist brother.¹

Gumberg used this salon as the tool of his trade. He possessed, as did few others, extensive knowledge about Russia which

he could dispense among his growing numbers of political contacts within the Republican party. His success in acquiring Soviet periodicals amazed contemporaries. Bundles of magazines and newspapers of the most recent date, a virtual library cataloging Soviet current events, lay about his apartment. No one may ever know precisely how he accomplished it, but Gumberg regularly received these materials even before the Allies lifted the blockade and before the resumption of normal mail service in May 1921. He translated these periodicals and established a mini-news agency for his journalistic and political associates.²

During the course of 1921 Gumberg exhausted the possibilities of his relatively independent status. Although a capable translator, he did not yet possess sufficient command of the English language to follow his young friend William Henry Chamberlin into journalism. A natural diplomat, his émigré status and America's non-recognition policy kept him from acting in any official diplomatic capacity. Yet he became a type of envoy. In order to establish himself as a liaison, Gumberg had to form institutional connections with Soviet Russia as well as with the United States. By the end of 1921 he joined the Special Trade Delegation of the Far Eastern Republic, a pseudocountry Soviet Russia permitted to exist as a means of avoiding a direct confrontation with Japan's Siberian forces.

With its capital at Chita, the Far Eastern Republic led a precarious existence, poised between the Red Army west of Lake Baikal and the Japanese army to the east. Controlling much of the old czarist Maritime Provinces as well as Sakhalin Island, the Japanese encouraged various bands of Russian monarchists, adventurers, and thieves to prey upon the hapless republic. The resulting instability, fostered by the Japanese command, became the principal rationale for the continued presence of Japanese troops in Siberia. The Far Eastern Republic eschewed communism, but the government's most important members, President Alexander Krasnoshchekov, Transport Minister Bill Shatov, Foreign Minister Ignatius Yourin, and Defense Minister Vasily Blücher, maintained intimate ties with Moscow.³

In 1921 the Far Eastern Republic had one hope to end Japanese

occupation. On November 11 the Arms Limitations Conference opened in Washington. As the world's capitals learned of the conference, the Far Eastern Republic hoped Japan would be called to account for her Siberian adventurism. The Japanese government also recognized that the Washington Conference could focus world attention on Siberia. As a result, Japan, with great fanfare, began negotiations with the Far Eastern Republic at Dairen. The protagonists failed to resolve the central issue—Japanese evacuation. Obviously Japan agreed to the Dairen Conference to placate world opinion and defuse the issue of Japanese imperialism at the Washington Conference. Between October 14 and November 1, 1921, the Far Eastern Republic commissioned three Russians, Alexander A. Yazikov, Boris E. Skvirsky, and Peter N. Karavaev to act as a Special Trade Delegation to reestablish commercial relations between the United States and Siberia. Actually, once in America, the delegation directed a lobbying campaign to place Japan's occupation of eastern Siberia on the agenda of the Washington Conference.⁴

When the delegates arrived they appointed Alexander Gumberg secretary of the Special Trade Delegation. Since Gumberg had been kept at arm's length from the Ludwig Martens Mission, it would appear unusual that he could qualify to represent, via a circuitous path, the interests of Moscow. However, in his association with liberal journalists and in the Russian relief work, Gumberg overcame the counterrevolutionary stigma placed on him by John Reed. Jessica Smith, editor of *New World Review*, first met Gumberg when Williams took her to his apartment in 1919. She recalled that "some of my left friends mistrusted Alex." Nevertheless, Smith believed that the issues of trade, relations, and Japanese occupation "were of such importance to Lenin and the other Soviet leaders that the fact that Alex played such a unique and useful role in these spheres seems to me a sufficient explanation of why Alex was able to work with the FER." Also, Gumberg knew several of the most important members of the Chita regime, especially such Russian-Americans as Krasnoshchekov and Shatov. Finally, Zorin, in close daily contact with important Soviet figures in Moscow, may have recommended his brother to the del-

egation. In December 1921, after the Special Trade Delegation arrived, it sought out and hired Gumberg to be its translator and liaison with the American government and press.⁵

A fundamental question naturally arises in regard to Gumberg's employment by the Special Trade Delegation of the Far Eastern Republic. His ties with the Soviet-linked representatives seriously compromised his professed position as a witness sympathetic, but not committed, to the Russian revolution. This new collaboration erroneously convinced Harding administration officials of Gumberg's bolshevism. Yet evidence suggests that the Russian-American believed both Soviet Russia and the United States and their policies could be advanced by the delegate's activities.

Gumberg had a rather casual attitude toward his immediate employment with the delegation. On several occasions he revealed to Robins and Goodrich that he would quickly forfeit his job for one which appeared more important to his ultimate goal. In May 1922 he quit his employment for two weeks because of the prospect of going to Russia as Goodrich's secretary and translator. In addition, he did not permanently move to Washington, where the delegation established its headquarters. Once the Washington Conference ended, Gumberg spent considerable time in New York. Frankie did not accompany her husband on his many trips between New York and the capital. She worked in New York and earned more money than her immigrant spouse—a source of slight embarrassment for Alexander. Gumberg's monthly salary of \$375 was comfortable for the 1920s but not enough to purchase his complete allegiance. He continued to accept temporary assignments from New York law firms to act as a Russian legal expert in American litigation. Two or three afternoons of court testimony netted the Russian-American more money than his salary from the delegation.⁶

After the Washington Conference, the delegation's chairman departed for Soviet Russia, leaving Skvirsky in charge. The correspondence between Gumberg and Skvirsky is matter-of-fact and entirely lacking in the comradely spirit one might expect had Gumberg dedicated himself to the historic inevitabilities outlined by Karl Marx. Shortly before Gumberg quit, a strain developed in

his relationship with Skvirsky. At least one of Gumberg's acquaintances in the 1920s attributed this to Gumberg's complete cynicism toward Communist ideology. His favorite pejoratives to describe Communists, "boobs" or "superboobs," were not merely for the ears of Herbert Hoover. Gumberg unhesitatingly expressed his skepticism about bolshevism to the many members of his salon, composed predominantly of radical writers.⁷

Since the Special Trade Delegation was a thinly disguised extension of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, a second important question emerges. Did the delegation possess some conspiratorial mandate from Moscow via Chita to employ Gumberg as its front or, worse, use Gumberg in some way for the benefit of the Communist or Third International? Gumberg held the confidence of persons high within the American political system, and it might appear he helped Soviet agents gain entrance to officials of the United States government. The 1920s, however, lacked sophisticated military weapons and the nuclear technology which in a later age might have been the object of attention by a superpower antagonistic toward the United States. Soviet Russia was a weak country in 1921, partially occupied, and barely able to repulse, the previous year, an invasion by Poland. Surviving without a navy and forced to conduct at least 96 percent of its trade in foreign vessels, Soviet Russia was no physical threat to the United States.⁸ Finally, those goals advanced by the delegation, which in the most unsophisticated of intellects might be construed as trickery, conspiracy, or worse, were shared by the United States government.

Rather than Gumberg's being used by the Special Trade Delegation, the Harding administration used the representatives to further American foreign policy in the Far East. When Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes issued invitations for the Washington Conference in July 1921, the State Department studiously avoided seeking the presence of Soviet Russia. American antipathy toward Moscow, however, did not mean that the United States would completely surrender Siberia to the exclusive advantage of Japan. A basic feature of American diplomacy, as subsequently revealed at the Washington Conference, was to minimize the imperial designs of Japan and maintain, without force of arms, the Open Door in the Far East. Thus, after Japan indicated its willingness to

negotiate, the State Department supported the Far Eastern Republic to prevent Japan from acquiring a permanent foothold in Siberia. American Consul John K. Caldwell received instructions to journey to Chita and investigate its viability and independence. The very presence of an American official bolstered the Chita regime and warned Japan of America's concern about the continued Japanese incursion in Russia's eastern provinces. The State Department also permitted Chita to send, under the guise of a trade commission, an unofficial group to Washington. By December 1921 the delegation arrived and requested that Hughes accept its credentials and authorize it to appear before the Washington Conference. Hughes denied to Yazikov, Skvirsky, and Karavaev any official standing, but the State Department took the extraordinary step of allowing an unofficial delegation from an unrecognized government to submit memoranda for the benefit of America's representatives to the Washington Conference.⁹

Gumberg played a major role in whatever success the delegation achieved between December 1921 and February 1922. He knew and could brief the delegation on the nature of American foreign policy and the structure of the government which formulated that policy. Having valuable contacts, including William Boyce Thompson, who chaired the Advisory Commission attached to the Washington Conference, he could be seen leading his employers through the halls of the State Department as well as Congress. As a translator, he prepared documents for presentation to American officials and the press. Finally, he acted as the publicity agent for the Special Trade Delegation. The inside track he held with the liberal press, particularly the *Nation*, gave the delegation a forum among liberal intellectuals.¹⁰

As requested, Yazikov forwarded memoranda about the Siberian issue to the State Department. The department, however, persisted in refusing to place the Siberian question on the agenda or to permit the Special Trade Delegation to speak before the Washington Conference. There were three cardinal features of American policy toward the Far Eastern Republic and the Washington Conference. First, the views of the Republic must be aired. Second, to avoid antagonizing Japan, the American delegation should not become the instrument for permitting the delega-

tion to appear before the conference. Third, if the delegation's position, i.e., criticism of Japan, was not presented, it should be the responsibility of the entire conference and not that of the United States. Under these circumstances, what occurred next was inevitable. Thwarted in their primary goal, Gumberg and the delegation began to bypass the State Department and to direct their appeals to the American press and the American delegates to the conference. In four days, from December 31, 1921, to January 3, 1922, the delegates launched a publicity blitz which had a chilling effect on their relations with the American government but which ultimately forced the conference to take up the issue of Japan's Siberian occupation.

On December 31 Yazikov wrote Hughes and the other American delegates letters charging Japan had organized Russian bandits who conducted systematic and terroristic warfare on the population of the Far Eastern Republic. The arguments apparently had an effect. On January 4, 1922, the Washington Conference's Subcommittee on the Pacific and Far Eastern Questions issued to the American delegates a confidential report not only critical of Japan's Siberian intervention but also supportive of the position and legitimacy of the Chita regime. For three days, beginning January 1, Gumberg and Skvirsky made available to the press a series of documents, communications between Japanese officers and Russian warlords, substantiating their charge of Japanese collusion with White Russian reactionaries. Damaging to the credibility of the Special Trade Delegation was the press release alleging a Franco-Japanese détente to transfer French-sponsored White Russians to Vladivostok. France immediately denied the documents' authenticity, claiming they were forgeries and Hughes publicly accepted the French position. Nevertheless, as the *New York Times* Washington correspondent stated: "Whatever the effect the incident has on the standing of the delegation from the Far Eastern Republic, which gave out the documents, it has at least brought the Siberian question squarely before the eyes of the world."¹¹

This notoriety forced the American government to be more circumspect in dealing with Yazikov, Skvirsky, and Karavaev. However, the State Department, through January, continued to accept memoranda, without officially acknowledging them, and to hold

discussions with the Special Trade Delegation. Internally, the State Department accepted the validity of all the Far Eastern Republic's claims except for that of Franco-Japanese collusion. The worldwide publicity attained by the delegation forced Japan, on January 23, to make some statement on Siberia to the Washington Conference. Ambassador Shidehara promised, as Japan had done so many times before, that as soon as stability returned to Siberia his country would remove its occupying troops. Hughes responded the following day by reminding the ambassador of America's repeated notes of protest over the prolonged occupation.¹² Gumberg's association with the Special Trade Delegation helped bring the Siberian matter before the Washington Conference. The several treaties resulting from the deliberations did not include any settlement for Siberia, but continued international pressure, public and governmental, coupled with Japanese internal problems, forced an evacuation of Siberia by October 25, 1922.

After the Washington Conference concluded, Yazikov returned to Russia. Subsequently, the Soviet government sent him back to North America as its official agent in Canada. The truncated delegation over which Skvirsky presided decided to take advantage of its initial American invitation and remained to advance the cause of trade between the United States and the Far Eastern Republic. During the spring and summer of 1922 Gumberg guided the delegation on tours through various American industrial plants. Availing himself of his political contacts, he prevailed on Senator Joseph S. Freylinghuysen of New Jersey to write a letter of introduction on behalf of Skvirsky to Felix Lacks, president of the United States Manufacturers Export Corporation. On the whole, however, Gumberg's endeavors on behalf of the Far Eastern Republic proved singularly unsuccessful. As long as Japan and the White Russian warlords held the Pacific Coast tight, the Far Eastern Republic could trade only through Russia or by a circuitous route from Dairen, by way of the South Manchurian and Chinese Eastern Railroads, to Harbin and then to Chita.¹³

Typical of the impediments and complexities involved in commercial arrangements between the Far Eastern Republic and the United States was the case of Harry F. Sinclair. Early in 1922 the Chita government granted the Sinclair Exploration Company

an oil concession in Sakhalin. By the time this arrangement became public in February 1923, the Far Eastern Republic no longer existed and for all practical purposes neither did the Sinclair concession. Japan retained control of all Sakhalin until the signing in 1925 of a Soviet-Japanese convention reestablishing relations and calling for the removal of Japanese troops from the northern half of the island.¹⁴

Surprisingly, Gumberg devoted little time toward achieving recognition of the Far Eastern Republic in the spring and summer of 1922. The State Department always discouraged the violation of Russia's territorial integrity even though it declined to recognize the government which ruled Russia. The patently synthetic nature of the Far Eastern Republic may have limited the delegation's credibility in seeking recognition. Writing to Goodrich in late fall 1922, Gumberg dejectedly told the former governor that the "Delegation has been here for almost a year with no apparent results."¹⁵

By October two circumstances prompted Gumberg to focus his attention on gaining American recognition of the Far Eastern Republic. The State Department had earlier violated its own principles by elevating to ministerial status the United States consuls in Russia's former Baltic provinces of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.¹⁶ The action raised the possibility that America might officially acknowledge the country at the opposite end of the Eurasian land mass. The pro-Soviet sympathies of the Republic's government meant that should it be recognized by the United States, the Far Eastern Republic might in turn ease the normalization of relations between Soviet Russia and America. Second, Japanese occupation of Siberia, except for Sakhalin, ended in October and allowed the expansion of the Far Eastern Republic to the Pacific Coast and the principal port, Vladivostok.

Gumberg initiated strategy meetings with Thomas Thacher and Goodrich. Under these new circumstances, Goodrich agreed to communicate to the Harding administration his support for the recognition of the Far Eastern Republic. On November 6, 1922, he invited Gumberg to bring Skvirsky to his Winchester, Indiana, home to map plans. Swiftly these schemes ended as the Far Eastern Republic's National Assembly took up the question of becoming a Soviet Republic and rejoining Russia. As news of these far-off

deliberations reached Gumberg he canceled the tripartite meeting with Goodrich. He explained to the politician that "it is natural, that with no encouragement or sympathy from the only country [i.e., United States] from which such might have been expected, and the danger of Japanese aggression . . . the Russian people of the Far East are turning to their mother country and want a closer alliance with it." Overnight the Special Trade Delegation lost its need for the surreptitious advocacy of closer Soviet-American relations. Under the leadership of Skvirsky the delegation remained in Washington, where Skvirsky assumed the title of commercial representative of Soviet Russia. By September 1923 the delegation evolved into the Russian (later, Soviet Union) Information Bureau. The termination of the Far Eastern Republic's independence on November 19, 1922, left Skvirsky in the position of semiofficial consul for Soviet Russia. Thus, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt considered recognizing Russia in 1933, the United States turned first to Skvirsky as the best available avenue for opening discussions with the Stalin dictatorship.¹⁷

The synthetic nature of the Special Trade Delegation allowed Gumberg to pursue, at times with considerable success, the improvement of American-Russian relations. As Skvirsky's secretary, Gumberg could couple the Moscow lines of communications with his American contacts and act as a fixer, a go-between, an informal diplomat-consul in many areas involving politics and business. When Charles Recht, a Soviet sympathizer who attended the Genoa Conference, arrived in the United States in June 1922, he carried instructions from Anatole Lunacharsky, commissar of education. Recht proceeded to the Washington headquarters of the Special Trade Delegation and produced his credentials for Skvirsky and Gumberg. Part of Recht's instructions enjoined him to act on behalf of the cinema section of the Commissariat of Education in negotiating with American movie companies for the exchange of films between the two countries. Gumberg wrote to Robins asking his friend to get an appointment with Will Hays. Involved in Republican politics, Hays was also president of the Motion Pictures Producers & Distributors of America, Inc. Although Gumberg may have met Hays before, Robins sent Gumberg a letter of introduction to ease the arrangement for a meeting of Hays, Gumberg, and

Recht. Later Robins took the opportunity to see Hays so that by the time Gumberg and Recht had their interview on July 8, Gumberg could relate that Hays "was as nice as could be and quick as lightning. He treated me royally."¹⁸

Robins had predicted that Gumberg would get along quite well with Hays. In strictest confidence he informed Gumberg that Hays secretly managed the "Hoover for President" boom. Sharing Robins's views on Russia, Hays hoped the secretary of commerce would "make good there," and Hays believed the United States should establish relations with Russia. The intricate line between business, politics, and the Russian sympathizers is illustrated by Recht's choice of counsel. Gumberg insisted that Recht seek the advice of the law firm of Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett. Most conveniently Thacher's firm was engaged by the Motion Pictures Producers & Distributors, Inc. Not only did Hays appear receptive to Recht and Gumberg but in collaboration with Thacher a memorandum was drawn up for the exchange of movies. Ultimately, Thacher's office helped incorporate a Soviet agency, Amkino Corporation, to institutionalize the agreements reached in July 1922.¹⁹

The intimate ties Gumberg established with American political-business circles and with the Soviet government offered him a unique opportunity to coordinate the search for better relations with Russia. While his activities were not always as successful as in facilitating the exchange of movies, Gumberg exerted a complex, intricate, and subtle influence in the backstairs movement for closer Soviet-American relations. At times he seemed to be the invisible director of a stage play. He created the scenario but would lose control to the prima donna actors hired by the producer. An example of his influence occurred in the summer of 1922 when, for a short period, there existed a very real possibility of some type of American commission being sent to Russia to improve trade and possibly to establish diplomatic relations.

Unfortunately the conversation Gumberg had with Goodrich, shortly before the latter's departure for Russia in May 1922, has not been reported. Goodrich may have revealed to his Russian-American friend that part of his mission was to discuss trade and debts with Soviet leaders. Several days later, while Gumberg sat in the New York headquarters of the American Relief Administration,

Herbert Hoover directed George Baker to show Gumberg a confidential memorandum on the Goodrich trip. While he repeatedly refused to tell any of his acquaintances the substance of the secret document, Gumberg began to urge Robins to write to Hoover giving him Robins's support for some type of American commission to Russia. The colonel's procrastination frustrated Gumberg and in mid-June he wrote Robins: "I do hope that you will consider this matter seriously and do something about it."²⁰ The timing of this communication and Gumberg's obvious belief that a critical moment had arrived suggested that Gumberg knew Goodrich's itinerary in Russia. From the Special Trade Delegation he may have been able to predict Russia's response to an invitation for improved trade relations.

At 2:30 P.M. on June 19, 1922, Goodrich entered the office of Leo Kamenev, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and titular head of the government following Lenin's stroke three weeks earlier. Kamenev and Goodrich discussed the debt impediment to Soviet-American trade. They were joined by Alexey Rykov, deputy chairman, Leonid Krassin, commissar of foreign trade, Gregory Sokolnikov, commissar of finance, and Maxim Litvinov, assistant commissar of foreign affairs.²¹

Two days later Gumberg finally succeeded in getting Robins to send a memorandum to Hoover recommending that "a commission authorized through the Secretary of Commerce be sent at the earliest convenient date to Russia." The timing of this two-page memorandum to coincide with Goodrich's discussions in Russia is very apparent and makes understandable the imperative tone Gumberg used with Robins. Furthermore, Robins's suggested members of the commission included Dwight Morrow, John Sutherland, Allen Wardwell, Goodrich, Thacher, and Gumberg. The pro-Russian bias of the Robins recommendation helps explain Hoover's unenthusiastic response. Nevertheless, Goodrich returned to the United States on July 15, 1922, to be greeted by Gumberg, who was privy to Goodrich's report to the Harding administration. Gumberg admitted to Robins that Goodrich was hazy on the subject of recognition, but took heart when he read Goodrich's report which stated that "the first thing to do is to appoint a Commission of experts to go into Russia, carefully examine the eco-

conomic situation and report to our Government." The idea for a multipurpose American delegation to Russia, partially engineered and coordinated by Gumberg, took effect. The commission concept trickled through the United States government and received the endorsement of both President Harding and, unexpectedly, Hughes in the latter half of July. Hughes instructed America's ambassador to Germany, Alanson B. Houghton, to talk with a Soviet representative in Berlin on August 1, 1922.²²

The unofficial negotiations between American and Soviet officials did not live up to the promise of Gumberg's initial success. Houghton proved to be a particularly inept choice to carry out these delicate discussions. Former congressman and president of Corning Glass, he had a seat on Metropolitan Life's Board of Directors. The insurance company belonged to the most vocal anti-Soviet business association in America, the National Civic Federation. At the outset the ambassador protested against his assignment to Hughes. Houghton believed the Soviet regime would topple at any moment because of political strife and economic instability.²³ The subject of debts and national pride, moreover, made it easy for Houghton to exert his negative influence. The Soviet government could not honor czarist debts to America, for such a policy would force Russia to pay even larger debts to the European countries with whom it was reestablishing relations.

The immediate reason, though, for the failure of an American commission to materialize lay squarely at the door of national pride. Commissar of Foreign Affairs George Chicherin agreed to the proposed United States Economic Commission, but Russia insisted on reciprocity. National honor dictated that Russia be permitted to send an economic delegation to the United States at the same time she received an American commission. This exhibition of pique by a regime which outwardly showed contempt for nationalism perplexed Gumberg because it was totally unexpected. Gumberg expressed to Robins his hope that "the Russians will not stand on their dignity and will not give the cold shoulder" to the American proposal. Russian insistence and America's unwillingness to honor the concept of equality caused the entire project to be abandoned by mid-September.²⁴

An all-but-forgotten sidelight to Gumberg's exertions for bet-

ter Soviet-American relations was that an unofficial commission did indeed go to Moscow in the fall of 1922. Early in July, shortly after the Harding administration had apparently ignored Robins's memorandum, Gumberg considered going to Russia with a group led by Allen Wardwell. This commission would act for the benefit of numerous private relief agencies in reporting on Russia's economic condition and need for further aid. Other members of this proposed endeavor included Allen Burns, chairman of the National Information Bureau, and Graham Taylor, former associate of Edgar Sisson. When queried by Gumberg about participating in this venture, Robins told his former secretary: "Burns is a radical and has absolutely no influence at Washington and little throughout the country. The commission is weak at these two points and they are points that very well may determine its value." Demonstrating great respect for the political acumen of the colonel, Gumberg and Wardwell decided not to accompany Burns and Taylor to Russia. However, Gumberg suggested to Burns individuals who would help make the mission successful.²⁵

When Burns and Taylor returned from Russia in January 1923, Gumberg and Wardwell arranged for them to see Herbert Hoover and other political figures. The unofficial commission informed Hoover that Russia required additional relief. Hoover, noting that Russia had resumed the exportation of grain, did not consider new pleas for Russian relief to be appropriate.²⁶ Robins's instincts and assessment of this privately sponsored commission proved entirely correct.

The lesson of these two commissions, one official but aborted and the other unofficial but powerless, was not lost on Gumberg. He realized that all his friends in the radical circles of New York, including those in his own salon, could not alter Russian-American relations through journalism, relief agencies, or visits to Soviet Russia. The near-establishment of a United States-sponsored delegation to Russia demonstrated that Gumberg's greater asset had been his association with politicians, especially Robins and Goodrich. Already successful in achieving a direct link to Moscow via the Special Trade Delegation, Gumberg learned that a meaningful change in the official policy of the United States might be possible

by augmenting his contacts with American political figures. The year 1922 had been, for Gumberg, one of working with delegations and commissions in a back-door endeavor to reestablish communication between the two countries. The following year would find him assuming an even greater political role in a direct effort to gain Russia's diplomatic recognition by the United States.

7

STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION



IN THE EARLY 1920s Alexander Gumberg found himself in a perfect position to mediate reconciliation between America and Russia. The illness Raymond Robins suffered in 1921 projected Gumberg into an association with American political figures. Later that year he joined a group that evolved into an unofficial consulate for Soviet Russia. Gumberg wove a web connecting private and public American groups favorable to Russia while maintaining his link with Moscow. He moved back and forth to repair or strengthen broken or threatened lines of contact. Finally, the winds of fate destroyed his pattern and forced him to build anew.

Gumberg learned from Robins in September 1922 that the colonel considered speaking on behalf of several senatorial candidates who would later sponsor a recognition resolution in Congress. The Harding administration feared that Robins, using his oratorical talents in support of antiadministration candidates, might widen the breach between dissident and regular Republicans. On October 6 President Harding tried to neutralize Robins by offering him an appointment to the Coal Commission. Harding's letter followed four days after Robins and Senator William E. Borah conducted a large Chicago rally criticizing the president, among others, for his Russian policies.¹

Robins would not accept the appointment unless Harding compromised. He asked the chief executive to remember that the Soviet government had been in power nearly five years and had "raised the greatest armies in Europe, won peace through victories

on four fighting fronts, put down insurrections and survived the greatest famine of modern times." After criticizing President Woodrow Wilson's interventionist policies, he reminded Harding, "You spoke with understanding intelligence upon this subject while yet a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate. The platform upon which you were elected pledged our party to immediate resumption of trade relations with all nations with which we were not at war. Yet except for minor changes our present policy seems little changed from that of your predecessor. Russia has been forced into the arms of the Germans and the Turks and the menace of her isolation grows with the passage of time." The fear Robins expressed about Germany had indeed become a reality. Following the Treaty of Rapallo, Russia conducted much of her foreign trade and diplomatic relations through Berlin.²

The harsh *quid pro quo* Robins demanded of the president before he would join the government reflected the frustration of five years of trying to persuade the United States to adopt a realistic approach to the Russian Revolution. Privately he confided to Gumberg that his stern lecture may have caused a final break with the president. Actually, Harding responded in a most conciliatory manner. The chief executive spoke vaguely of "committed" policies but expressed his personal confidence in Robins's integrity. Harding, however, seemed to have achieved his desired ends. While the president scoffed at Robins's belief that the colonel's support was being bought, Robins decided to abstain from political activities in the fall elections, although he continued to speak out for Russian recognition.³

The alliance between Robins and Borah, evident in the Chicago rally, strengthened in December 1922, when Robins had his Russian-American friend meet the senator from Idaho. Thereafter Gumberg became a critical figure in coordinating the public campaign for recognition. His timely information on Soviet Russia aided speeches delivered by Robins, Borah, and Goodrich.

Scholars have not been careful to delineate the connections Gumberg acquired which made him indispensable in this campaign. Boris Skvirsky's trade delegation received regular bulletins from Soviet Russia through the Russian Telegraph Agency (ROSTA) via its counterpart, the Russian Trade Delegation of Lon-

don. In January 1923 direct information became available when ROSTA opened a New York branch under Gumberg's associate Kenneth Durant. Along with his other duties Gumberg became a special correspondent for ROSTA. He helped Durant gain interviews with and prepare articles on various American political leaders favoring closer Russian-American relations. Thus Gumberg contributed to the exchange of information between both countries.⁴

Gumberg's Russian ties became increasingly important after December 14, 1922, the date he held his first interview with Borah. Their talks went extremely well. The senator took Gumberg into his confidence immediately, in part because Robins's letter of introduction praised the Russian-American for "his ability, his integrity, his courage and his common sense." Gumberg became Borah's principal adviser in the struggle for an intelligent relationship with Russia. He reciprocated the trust Borah gave so quickly. The *New Yorker* appreciated the fact that Borah had been a strident opponent of intervention, had called for American recognition of Soviet Russia, and had led the attack against Boris Bakhmetev, forcing the latter to retire as Russian ambassador in April 1922. Although Borah hounded Bakhmetev from office, the State Department allowed the Russian embassy's financial attaché to control the defunct Provisional government's funds. After a European sojourn Bakhmetev haunted Soviet sympathizers by opening a New York office which claimed to be the Russian Financial, Industrial and Commercial Association.⁵

Gumberg enjoyed functioning as Russian adviser to Borah and other congressional figures, but it should not be forgotten that he operated out of Skvirsky's Washington office. To September 1923, Skvirsky permitted Gumberg wide latitude to perform in areas that had little to do with the trade delegation's operation. Skvirsky understood that his secretary had potential to effect a complete change in Soviet-American relations. Gumberg appreciated his independence and took care, when in New York, to inform Skvirsky of his many activities. Throughout the period under consideration, however, Gumberg acted as Skvirsky's agent for improved trade. For example, he set up an appointment with Herbert Hoover for Isaac Sherman, New York director of the Anglo-Russian Com-

pany, Arcos, Ltd. In the same month, January 1923, he briefed Philip Chadbourn, vice president of International Barnsdall Corporation. Barnsdall agreed, in a contract signed in Moscow, to conduct boring operations in the Baku oil fields. Gumberg supplied Chadbourn with information and letters of introduction and assured visas for a group of Barnsdall engineers who departed for Russia on January 27, 1923.⁶

Gumberg's broader scheme of putting congressional and public pressure on the Harding administration to change its Russian policy overshadowed his work for Russian-American trade. He advised Borah to resurrect a resolution the senator earlier had introduced calling for Russian recognition. Drawing a detailed plan of action, he asked Robins on January 12, 1923, to exert his influence with the senator to carry it out. Gumberg knew Borah's resolution would come before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee where Borah ranked second in seniority to Henry Cabot Lodge. He suggested that Borah head a subcommittee investigating recognition and use Thomas Thacher as counsel. Gumberg even worked up a list of sympathetic witnesses such as Allen Burns, Chadbourn, and Sherman, whose Arcos firm had recently purchased over \$10 million worth of American goods for Russia.⁷

As Robins learned in his espousal of outlawry of war, Gumberg learned over the issue of Russian recognition that the Idaho senator could not be prodded to action until he discerned the proper psychological moment to launch a major campaign. A shrewd politician, he rarely threw his total weight behind his own pet projects when he had to compete with other national or international events which threatened to take away the limelight. Unfortunately for Gumberg, France chose January 1923 as the proper moment to occupy the Ruhr Valley because of Germany's default on reparation payments. Gumberg's plan simmered for exactly one year before Borah, on January 11, 1924, finally introduced a resolution, took charge of a subcommittee, and conducted hearings on the recognition of Russia.⁸

Even though Borah delayed following Gumberg's recommendation for a period of time, he allowed the Russian-American to coordinate much of the propagand work with which he had

been personally involved. The astute Borah frequently used various women's groups, particularly the United States Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), to organize rallies before which he could speak and to garner publicity for his various campaigns in Congress. The WILPF's president, Jane Addams, had been a longtime friend of Raymond and Margaret Dreier Robins, and Mrs. Robins had, until 1922, led the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL). In 1922 the WILPF created a Women's Committee for Recognition of Russia, under the direction of Lucy Branham and containing many WTUL members.⁹ Gumberg had been quite aware of the Women's Committee and had intimate knowledge of its operation through Robins's family and Bessie Beatty, who was on the executive committee.

Shortly before the end of 1922 Robins placed Lucy Branham in touch with Gumberg and together they revived the Women's Committee for Recognition of Russia. Early in 1923 it began a letter-writing campaign to induce Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes to change America's Russian policy. The public, private, and political pressure resulted in Hughes's meeting with forty of the committee members. Among the many formidable women Hughes faced were Lucy Branham, Mrs. Robert La Follette, Bessie Beatty, Mrs. Edward C. King, representing the WTUL, and Mrs. Charles Edward Russell, wife of the journalist with whom Gumberg worked in 1917 on the Root Mission.¹⁰

Gumberg, with Branham, prepared the memorandum handed to the secretary of state on March 21, 1923.¹¹ The document took direct issue with the administration's previous statements that recognition could not be extended until the Russian government protected the rights of life, property, contract, and labor. Gumberg's thoughts are strongly apparent in the memorandum, which stated in part:

Americans in Russia during the past year report that life is as safe there as elsewhere. Among these are . . . ex-Governor Goodrich of Indiana. Since the introduction of the New Economic Policy in March, 1921, much legislation has been passed in Russia for the protection of life and freedom of the individual, involving guarantees for private property, the sanctity of contract and the rights of free

labor. . . . During the past year several American corporations concluded contracts with the Soviet Government, among them the Sinclair Oil Company and the Barnsdall Corporation of New York. According to press reports, both these companies are working in harmony with the Soviet Government.¹²

The Soviet regime's apparent stability failed to impress the secretary of state. In answering the Women's Committee for Recognition of Russia, he expressed distaste for a regime which upheld a consistent policy of confiscation and refused to honor international debts. The Soviets had compounded their disregard for property by promoting revolution through the propaganda of the Communist International. "Not only would it be a mistaken policy to give encouragement to repudiation and confiscation," explained Hughes, "but it is also important to remember that there should be no encouragement to those efforts of the Soviet authorities to visit upon other peoples the disasters that have overwhelmed the Russian people."¹³

The committee did not change the administration but, through political pressure, had forced the issue before a public forum where both sides could be heard. Gumberg extended his unusual behind-the-scenes position to advance Russian recognition and to counterattack adverse public criticism against the Soviet regime through his political friends. Thus after Lodge, on February 21, 1923, severely criticized Russia in the Senate, Gumberg asked Goodrich to write to the Massachusetts senator. In his speech Lodge claimed Russia had failed to live up to treaty obligations and had failed to prevent "marauding bandits" from roaming around the countryside. Goodrich wrote Lodge not one, but two, letters. In the first, he suggested that Lodge had erred in his perception of Soviet Russia's internal affairs. Goodrich personally saw no evidence that supported tales of continuing anarchy in Russia. He had talked to "hundreds" of American Relief Administration "boys" and could assure the senator that "the information upon which he relied was entirely false." In the second letter, Goodrich reminded Lodge that Soviet Russia had upheld all its treaties, and he reported personal assurances from George Chicherin "that every treaty and contract made by the Government would be carried

out." Lodge responded cordially enough for Goodrich to write Gumberg, "I think I did some good."¹⁴

A dynamo, Gumberg generated support for his views. The voluminous correspondence he maintained attests to his belief that the year 1923 would be a year of decision in Russian-American affairs. He asked Robert La Follette, Jr., to advocate recognition before an upcoming Farmer-Labor party convention. He encouraged the Foreign Policy Association in the same direction and advised it on the new constitution which created the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. By the same token he struck counterblows, as in the case of Lodge, against Soviet-baiters. Samuel Gompers exchanged letters critical of Russia with Hughes. President of the conservative but successful American Federation of Labor, Gompers strongly defended American business. In July he asked Hughes for a definitive anti-Soviet statement and Hughes gladly obliged by publicly cataloging Soviet ills. Gumberg urged several senators, such as Democrat Burton K. Wheeler, to speak out against, as Gumberg described them, "inspired untruths" issued in the Gompers-Hughes exchange.¹⁵

The most difficult and perplexing situation with which Gumberg had to contend in 1923 was the Soviet execution in March of Monsignor Constantine Buchavich. Vicar general of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia, he committed the Soviet sin of counter-revolutionary activity. The specter of bearded, bomb-throwing Bolsheviks reappeared suddenly in the American press and severely damaged Soviet Russia's image. Catholics shared their horror with many Americans who believed the Soviets had condemned themselves when they killed a priest. The execution reconfirmed communism's black reputation as the devil's own.¹⁶

Gumberg's secular funeral in 1939 helps explain his attempt to rationalize the Buchavich execution among friends and acquaintances in March and April 1923. Officiated without benefit of clergy, the affair was conducted by Floyd Odum. KKO's male quartet provided appropriate music as Thomas Thacher, Robert La Follette, and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins delivered short eulogies over the casket.¹⁷ Gumberg had been serious when in May 1922 he told Herbert Hoover he did not believe in anything. His anti-ideological views extended to the realm of religion.

Gumberg's atheism, however, did not keep him from seeing the damaging results of religious persecution in Russia. He privately admitted to Robins that the Soviet government blundered. "Ever since they [Soviets] pinched the Roumanian minister and repudiated the foreign debts," he wrote, "they seem to have a periodical [*sic*] crazy stunt." Noting the political realism of Lenin, Gumberg could not believe that the "big chief" would tolerate such a damaging course of action. Unfortunately, Gumberg thought, Lenin had suffered strokes which prevented him from dealing rationally with the Buchavich affair. Early the next year Lenin experienced a fatal attack.¹⁸

To his other friends, however, Gumberg defended the execution on three grounds. He partially accepted official Soviet explanations that the Roman Catholic prelate had committed treasonable acts during the Russo-Polish War. It was plausible to him that anti-Bolshevik Catholics might have assisted their co-religionists. Second, he knew from the past that the Soviet government's anti-religious activity occurred within the broader movement of separating church from state, a movement which had frequently been a painful and violent process in the Western world. Third, he blamed the war, revolution, civil war, Allied intervention, and blockade for the hate and cruelty which existed in Soviet Russia. This became a principal line of defense argued by Russian sympathizers, such as Borah.¹⁹

As Gumberg remarked to Goodrich, the execution presented a golden opportunity for Russia's enemies. For a considerable period the American anti-Bolshevik press had been relatively quiet.²⁰ The execution renewed a brief flurry of anti-Sovietism and threatened to unravel the threads of Soviet-American relations Gumberg laboriously had woven over the past year.

Although Gumberg had a casual, even callous regard for religion, trials and executions always disturbed him. He possessed a genuinely humane instinct in the preservation of life; indeed, his support of the Bolsheviks originated out of a belief that the Soviet government advanced social and economic reform for the benefit of individual Russians. Thus Gumberg was briefly caught in the middle, striving to increase beneficial Soviet-American contacts but repulsed by Soviet actions. He laid his soul bare to his longtime

friend Jerome Davis, a sociologist at Dartmouth College. Davis had first met Gumberg in Russia in 1917–1918 when the youthful scholar worked for the Young Men’s Christian Association. The author of many articles and books favorable to Soviet Russia, Davis frequently consulted Gumberg in preparing his manuscripts. When Davis asked about the execution of a Catholic priest, Gumberg exhibited his distress by the length of his response—two typed single-spaced pages. The letter outlined his thoughts on the previous five years of Russian history and stated in part:

My personal viewpoint is that it was a very unfortunate occurrence. Of course I do not believe that a priest is exempt from punishment. . . . It raises the question whether one believes in capital punishment or in terror in time of revolution. Not being a bloodthirsty individual I never liked executions especially on a large scale, as took place for some weeks during 1918. But as you know I am not a revolutionist, but all these years have been a platonic sympathizer of the Russian Revolution. I always had an unpleasant feeling when I used to read about the executions during what was called “the red terror”. . . . But all these years I have also been reading the tales of “white terror”. . . . a composite picture in my mind of all these horrors of the “whites” so completely blots out any feeling that I might have about the “red terror,” that it is difficult for me to write and condemn these people in Russia who have been carrying the burden . . . for the past five and half years. You and I were in Russia for the first six months of the Revolution. You must remember that during that time there were no political executions, no terror. I do not like executions, but I will not lift my pen and write an indictment [*sic*] of those men in Russia who prior to the Revolution and since have courageously fought for what they believe and always risked their lives. So many of my dearest friends have perished on the battlefields while fighting in the civil war, . . . that I feel that I, who is [*sic*] comfortably removed from all these horrors, have no right to criticise these people for using methods in saving and protecting their revolution and their lives as well, of which I do not approve.²¹

Fortunately for Gumberg, the public animosity raised by the execution of the Catholic official was intense but brief. Many American Catholics, however, had a long memory and did not possess Gumberg’s sophistic mentality; members of the church

hierarchy maintained a significant degree of prejudice toward Soviet Russia.

Other types of news began to dispel the cloud religious persecution brought to Russian-American relations. In the spring of 1923 Russia received several important American visitors including Congressman Carroll L. Beedy of Maine and Senator Wheeler of Montana. In both instances Gumberg talked at length with the travelers, provided them reading materials, letters of introduction, and, through Skvirsky, assuring their acquisition of proper visa documents at the Russian embassy in Berlin. Wheeler especially appreciated Gumberg's aid, and after his return in June 1923, he continued to seek Gumberg's advice for press interviews and articles on Russia. Through Robins, Gumberg helped the senator arrange a speaking tour, remunerative to Wheeler and favorable to Soviet-American relations.²²

It was only natural that Gumberg should also desire to see Senator Borah make the excursion. Goodrich dissuaded him from pushing this idea too far, however, sensibly recognizing that anything Borah would see in Russia "would only confirm his present judgment. Having arrived at that conclusion before leaving, people back here would jump at the conclusion that he saw everything through partisan eyes."²³

While Borah did not make the journey, Gumberg assisted in preparing the self-constituted Unofficial Congressional Commission's departure to Russia in the summer of 1923. He became close to Congressman James A. Frear of Wisconsin who accompanied Senators Edwin F. Ladd of North Dakota and William H. King of Utah on a European junket between July 14 and October 15, 1923. The Unofficial Commission was quite a coup for the pro-Russian forces and generally received fair treatment from the American press. The Soviet government realized the important effect this delegation might have on future Russian-American relations and arranged meetings with Commissar of Foreign Trade Leo Krassin, Commissar of Education Anatole Lunacharsky, Premier Leo Kamenev, Armand Hammer of the Allied-American Corporation, and the president and directors of the State Bank. Acknowledging the damage done by the execution of Buchavich, the Soviet gov-

ernment also made an appointment for the delegates to visit Patriarch Tikhon of the Russian Orthodox Church. When the Unofficial Commission returned to the United States its members unanimously called for a renewal of trade relations.²⁴

"Never since the Revolution," Gumberg wrote Borah in early July, "have there been in Russia Americans as prominent in business and political life as are going there this summer." The stream of visitors, particularly politicians, entering Moscow gave rise to great expectations on Gumberg's part. In his correspondence with the Idaho senator, then out West delivering pro-Russian speeches, he predicted that Borah would have considerable support in Congress for his Soviet recognition resolution.²⁵

The optimism Gumberg displayed to Borah peaked that summer as he witnessed the strongest bid yet made for Russian recognition. In late April and early May 1923, the Russian-American coordinated a series of strategy meetings between Borah, Robins, and Goodrich. These discussions led the politicians to make an all-out effort to change the administration's Russian policy by talking to individuals at the highest levels—Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover and President Warren G. Harding. Borah's special task was to pressure Hoover; Goodrich's, to talk with the president; and Robins's, to prepare a detailed Russian memorandum, which was subsequently hand-carried to President Harding by Will Hays in mid-June. After reminding Harding again of his position in 1920, the stability of the Soviet regime, the failure of Wilson's interventionist policies, and the need for trade to help America's farming interests, Robins concluded his memorandum by stating: "Surely this policy of diminishing moral, political and economic relationship between the American and the Russian people is unsound. I believe this condition to be a continuing and growing menace to the economic welfare of America and the general well being and peace of the world." The president declined to make any immediate decision, but Goodrich advised Gumberg that the chief executive promised to reopen the whole Russian matter upon his return from a western trip. Gumberg confidentially predicted to his friend Boris Freeman, a correspondent for *Pravda*, that some type of relations between the United States and Russia would be established before the end of the year.²⁶

There followed a peculiar development which historian William A. Williams claims indicated that America and Russia almost resumed diplomatic ties in 1923. Robins went to Europe, ostensibly to advance his project for the outlawry of war. After meeting political leaders in London and Paris, he proceeded to Berlin at the end of July. According to Williams, Robins was poised in the German capital waiting to proceed to Russia should President Harding decide on the resumption of either diplomatic or full-trade relations.²⁷ While Williams's thesis is interesting and logical, existing evidence is unsupportive. Nevertheless, Robins certainly made himself available had Harding suddenly decided to concur with those Russian sympathizers belonging to the Republican party.

While Robins discussed Lenin's deteriorating health with Nicholas Krestinsky, Soviet ambassador to Germany, Harding died on August 2, making the conjecture about Robins's European sojourn patently unimportant and destroying several months of preparation by Gumberg, Borah, Goodrich, and Robins. While still in Berlin, Robins wrote Gumberg that the new president, Calvin Coolidge, would be more intolerant toward Russia than Harding or his predecessor, Wilson. Robins's assessment was sound. Only a few days earlier, Vice President Coolidge had sent his heartiest congratulations to Hughes for his Russian policy as publicized in the letter exchange with Gompers.²⁸

Gumberg expressed his distress over Harding's death to ROSTA correspondent Kenneth Durant, then in Moscow. Gumberg thought Coolidge would want to be elected in his own right in 1924; where this left the Russian issue he could not predict. He hoped the new president might want to do something spectacular to earn the Republican nomination the following year. To Goodrich and Borah, Gumberg spoke of his shock at the president's untimely demise. Genuinely upset, the normally dispassionate Gumberg could not hide his extreme disappointment with the turn of events. He wrote Skvirsky that he suffered severe stomach pains which incapacitated him. Within five days, from August 16 to August 22, 1923, he lost ten pounds.²⁹

Harding's death was a severe blow to the Russian sympathizers, but with equanimity and determination Gumberg single-handedly forged anew the coalition of politicians seeking to sway

President Coolidge to their position. Toward the end of August, while still weak from his ailment, he began to talk and to correspond with his political acquaintances. He urged Senators Wheeler and Borah to contact the new chief executive. Coolidge remained uncommitted but not unreceptive. Goodrich followed with an exchange of letters demonstrating to Coolidge that the American press was amenable to trade and recognition by citing favorable articles in the heretofore rabidly anti-Bolshevik *Indianapolis News*. Finally, in mid-October when the Unofficial Congressional Commission to Russia arrived in New York, Gumberg talked for several hours with its members. He convinced Frear, as coordinator for the group, to see Coolidge, but the congressman reported back to Gumberg negative results.³⁰

The intermixture of ups and downs, hopes and despairs, rumors and facts associated with the new Coolidge administration's attitudes toward Russia left Gumberg feeling great sadness on the day of the sixth anniversary of the Bolshevik insurrection. He recalled for Robins a conversation he had with Leon Trotsky years earlier. He had predicted to the then-commissar of foreign affairs that America would overcome its prejudice for the Russian Revolution because, in contrast with the countries of Europe, it was guided by principle. Six years later, however, Gumberg lamented that he had failed to see the "bigoted, short-sighted official mind" which was also a part of the American experience. "It seems to me," he continued, "that the job which I set out to do, of trying to help in bringing about a better understanding between my native land and the country of my adoption, was poorly done." Robins himself apparently felt by November that the Russian issue was dead. His communications with Coolidge concerned outlawry of war, not Russia. Gumberg admitted to Goodrich that even Borah's attitude had changed. Still assuring Gumberg that he would introduce a resolution, he conceded nevertheless that Coolidge was hopeless.³¹

Then on December 1, 1923, the pessimism of the previous month lifted. In the morning Robins conferred with Borah on his twin interests of Russia and outlawry of war. When he returned to his Washington hotel he discovered the White House had called several times. He immediately contacted Coolidge's secretary, Bas-

com Slemp, and learned he had been invited to lunch with the president. "After luncheon," Robins elatedly told Gumberg, "I was with the President for more than two hours and the whole matter was Russia. I was able to give him a better idea I think of the whole situation than I have been permitted to give Harding in all the time I discussed this question with the late President, and I felt Coolidge was really eager to act."³²

The president did indeed act. Five days later he delivered a message to Congress which appeared to call for negotiations between the United States and Soviet Russia on outstanding problems. A flurry of activity occurred in succeeding days. Using his Moscow connections, Gumberg along with Robins prepared a draft response for the use of George Chicherin, Soviet commissar of foreign affairs. Received in mid-December Chicherin's response to the president stated the Soviet government's "readiness to discuss with your government all problems mentioned in your message." On the subject of propaganda Chicherin called for "mutual non-intervention" and as for debts the commissar looked forward to negotiations based on "reciprocity."³³

Although the tone of Chicherin's note was friendly and conciliatory, the hint that America had been a participant in propaganda (through the American Relief Administration) or might owe debts to Russia (because of intervention) was anathema to the secretary of state. Hughes indignantly replied, "The American Government has not incurred liabilities to Russia or repudiated obligations. Most serious is the continued propaganda to overthrow the institutions of this country. This Government can enter into no negotiations until these efforts directed from Moscow are abandoned."³⁴

It was a mystery to Gumberg at the time and remained unclear why, if indeed whether, Coolidge allowed his secretary of state to slam the door on his own initiative.³⁵ The text of Hughes's note and the speed with which it was prepared and released to the American press (a matter of hours after receipt of the Chicherin telegram) indicated that Hughes had acted on his own. He did not even bother to say that he was replying on behalf of Coolidge. Apparently the Chicherin statement, including concepts of reciprocity, provided Hughes with enough justification to act unilaterally.

It was the second time in 1923 that Hughes had jumped at an opportunity to retain America's nonrecognition policy.

In analyzing the perplexing about-face from December 6 to 18, 1923, Goodrich told Gumberg that the Soviet government should have expressed more positively an interest in restoring confiscated property and settling debts. The postmortems, however, did little to disguise the fact that politically the issue of Russia was dead. Borah, dumbfounded about the exchange, continued to seek recognition through Congress and the press. But at the very moment he led a committee to investigate the Russian question, the scandals of the Harding administration erupted and all attention focused on the removal of the tainted attorney general, Harry M. Daugherty, and the unsavory characters belonging to Harding's "Ohio Gang."³⁶ Russian trade and recognition could not compete with a spicy domestic issue that gave the American press such good copy and provided a temporary shock to the Republican party. For Robins and Borah, neither outlawry of war nor the cause of Russia was more important than avoiding House approval of a bill of impeachment against a member of Coolidge's cabinet. Not only had the cause of Russia collapsed, but, with few exceptions, it remained in the background until the full weight of the depression and a Democratic administration came in. While the Soviet and American governments might have benefited by a resumption of relations, adding the Soviet albatross to the charges of corruption was more than the Coolidge government could be expected to handle.

When Goodrich wrote to the new president, he tacitly acknowledged a key factor in the recognition issue. He informed Coolidge, in so many words, that the administration would not be hurt by reestablishing diplomatic ties with Soviet Russia. This negative argument may have confirmed an all-important point for Coolidge and the several Republican regimes of the 1920s: the recognition of Russia involved no compelling interest except whether the Soviet government should promise to honor czarist debts and denationalize American property. Thus nonrecognition was a safe policy.³⁷

Gumberg learned in 1923 that Russian recognition required

more than a few friends situated close to the top of the American political structure. The prominence of his political associates guaranteed nothing more than that the case for Russia would be placed before those individuals in actual charge of America's Russian policy. Presidents and bureaucratic functionaries alike, however, found no vital need for recognition. The seeming bankruptcy of his political maneuvers led him subtly but irrevocably toward a group which would at one and the same time bring Russia and the United States together and develop broader pressure for the resumption of diplomatic relations. Gumberg never gave up his political associations, but by the end of 1923 he reentered the American business world, where he sought to achieve yet another medium of bringing America and Russia closer together.

8

GUMBERG & RUSSIAN-AMERICAN TRADE



FOR SIX YEARS Alexander Gumberg had been a knight-errant tilting at the windmill of American prejudice against Communist Russia. Little wonder the immigrant son of a rabbi perished long before his allotted three-score-and-ten! He had lived a lifetime by 1917 in the culture shock of emigration, in the struggle for livelihood in a strange land, in the chaos of Russia's revolution. Then followed six strenuous years, years not without their successes and enjoyments, but difficult and heartbreaking years for a man dedicated to a policy scorned by the vast majority of his contemporaries. Gumberg's work with writers and politicians failed to achieve the immediate objective of securing Russian recognition. But frequently movements and trends which seem to have been eclipsed and placed in obscurity are necessary antecedents in the synthesis of those dramatic events recorded for posterity.

Ten years after President Harding's death a Democratic president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, initiated moves leading to the recognition of Russia. By that time the internal economic situation of the two countries had vastly changed; indeed, conditions cruelly reversed themselves, so that by 1933 America's capitalism had become just as suspect in an age of depression as communism had been in the period of insecurity after World War I. Depression and Japan's revival of imperialistic adventures set the stage for President Roosevelt's action.

Four circumstances made the 1933 decision possible. The political and economic milieu Roosevelt faced permitted him to make a

dramatic foreign policy gesture which satisfied his penchant for personal diplomacy. Second, many prominent Russian sympathizers, whom Gumberg had advised, belonged to the opposition party. So enmeshed had Gumberg become in the political struggle for Russia that, of the four men considered leading candidates to be America's first ambassador to Soviet Russia, Gumberg was on intimate terms with three—Raymond Robins, Jerome Davis, Philip La Follette—and shared mutual acquaintances with Roosevelt's choice for the Moscow mission, William C. Bullitt. Third, journalists and scholars writing favorably about Russia in the early 1930s benefited from this alternative view established in the early 1920s by the assistance of Gumberg. Fourth, after 1923, the United States had enjoyed a lively commercial relationship with the Soviet Union. Indeed, the Roosevelt administration feared a declining trend and hoped recognition might be a harbinger for greater trade as a small but important part of the struggle to lift America out of the economic collapse. In the ten years prior to recognition, Russian-American trade revived and exceeded prewar levels. This renaissance in commercial relations found Gumberg in a dramatically different setting. No longer was he the quiet secretary, translator, adviser, behind-the-scenes mystery man whose life, according to William Henry Chamberlin, would make an intriguing plot for a novel.¹ He now became a major public figure in the reconstruction of Russian-American trade.

The premature death of Harding in August 1923 marked a watershed in Gumberg's life. Along with his Russian associate, Boris E. Skvirsky, he instinctively accepted the possibility that irregular and nongovernmental relations between America and Soviet Russia would continue indefinitely. Each sought to institutionalize those paths they perceived to better relations in the context of both short- and long-term benefits. In August, Skvirsky began to fashion the Russian (later, Soviet Union) Information Bureau and expected his secretary, Gumberg, to play an important part in the bureau's establishment and operation. Gumberg had different ideas. "I am just about fizzled out," he wrote to ROSTA's Kenneth Durant. He had tired of working for Skvirsky and, with the collapse of the recognition movement after Harding's demise, decided "it may be as good a time to quit as any."²

One could speculate at considerable length on why Gumberg made up his mind to leave Skvirsky in mid-August. Perhaps Skvirsky disliked his secretary's indifference to the Communist party. Then, too, Skvirsky's circle may have suffered dissension reflecting the disunity in Russia as factions within the party positioned themselves for power in anticipation of Lenin's death. At any rate Gumberg quite obviously had become bored with Skvirsky and loathed the loss of freedom he feared he would sustain by working for the new bureau. Early in September he went to Washington to confer with Skvirsky. Their discussions on September 5, 1923, degenerated into an argument because their positions had become irreconcilable. When Skvirsky insisted the Gumbergs give up their New York apartment for a Washington residence, Gumberg flatly refused. Suffering ill health, he pleaded unsuccessfully for a vacation. Skvirsky issued an ultimatum: either Gumberg had to come to Washington immediately and organize the information bureau or resign. Gumberg chose the latter. His place was eventually taken by Harold Kellock, former secretary of the American Commercial Association to Promote Trade with Russia.³

The idea of organizing an information bureau had little appeal for Gumberg. From firsthand experience he knew the limited value of propaganda. Furthermore, the job would tie him down to working on petty details and prevent him from keeping up his voluminous correspondence and personal contact with literary and political figures. A foretaste of the type of chores he would have to perform for the bureau had come shortly before the unsatisfactory conference of September 5. Skvirsky instructed him to collect photographs of Soviet officials and to gather a master list for press releases addresses of all American publishers, magazines, and newspapers. For six years Gumberg had been associated with, if not the matrix of, great schemes and had worked with even greater personalities. He decided the daily tasks of the bureau would be a waste of his time. He began to refer to Skvirsky as a "pin head" whose "only fun in life seems to be keeping me busy" with matters "that do not mean anything." His opinion of the efficacy of the Soviet Union Information Bureau has been generally sustained by American historians, who resurrect the bureau only to discuss it as

a channel of communication to Soviet Russia used by the United States in 1933.⁴

Despite their differences and apparently rancorous arguments, Skvirsky and Gumberg did not irrevocably end their relationship. Gumberg remained employed by Skvirsky until the latter part of November and the two continued to correspond and talk on those occasions when Gumberg visited Washington to meet Robins or various politicians such as Senator William E. Borah.⁵ Gumberg's dream of reconciling the United States with Russia did not permit him to terminate his relationship with the semiofficial representative of Soviet Russia. Skvirsky may have considered Gumberg rather independent and ideologically suspect but he understood the political usefulness of his secretary. While the two retained a working relationship, an undercurrent of suspicion and mild bitterness always remained.

Three months before Gumberg and Skvirsky had their unfortunate interview, an event took place which intimately involved Gumberg and ultimately changed the course of his life. On May 31, 1923, Victor P. Nogin, president of the All-Union Textile Syndicate (vts) in Moscow, wrote Skvirsky asking for assistance in securing an American visa. His projected trip to the United States would have a momentous effect on Russian-American trade. The credentials Nogin carried were impressive: vice president of the Central Executive Committee, member of the Presidium of the All-Russian Soviet, and one of nineteen leaders guiding Soviet Russia's Economic Council. Formerly a commissar of trade and industry, Nogin helped negotiate the first Anglo-Soviet trade agreement.⁶ His trip to the United States was equivalent to Herbert Hoover's visiting Soviet Russia. Under those conditions it would have been a gross insult to the Soviets had the United States refused a visa, and great care was exercised by individuals in both countries to avoid unnecessary embarrassment.

Skvirsky immediately turned Nogin's letter over to Gumberg, who was then deeply concerned with coordinating the effort to reverse America's nonrecognition policy. Gumberg asked James P. Goodrich to intervene with the State Department on Nogin's behalf. Gumberg did not have to use an excessive amount of persuasion, for the former Indiana governor recalled a pleasant meeting

with Nogin when he had been in Moscow the previous summer. Writing Secretary Hughes, Goodrich urged that Nogin's visa application not be arbitrarily refused. He went so far as to pledge his honor and accept responsibility for Nogin's character and actions while in the United States. After Hughes assured Goodrich that Nogin's application would be approved, Gumberg relayed this bit of good news to Skvirsky, who in turn cabled details of these confidential maneuvers to Maxim Litvinov, deputy commissar of foreign affairs.⁷

From the time these arrangements were completed, July 5, 1923, until Nogin's arrival in New York on November 20, Gumberg seems to have given little thought to the impending visit of the president of *vrs*. Even a few days before Nogin's arrival, he was far more concerned about getting President Coolidge to mention Russia in his first congressional message. Gumberg's final assignment in the employ of Skvirsky was to greet the Soviet official. He need have done little more than direct Nogin to the New York offices of Arcos and perhaps introduce the visitor to a few people. Within six days, however, he became Nogin's American assistant.⁸

Gumberg never clearly divulged in his correspondence precisely why Nogin invested complete confidence in a man who initially acted as nothing more than a tour guide. It may have been significant that Gumberg's younger brother, Zorin, was a lieutenant of Gregory Zinoviev, third member of the ruling troika then presiding over Russia. More likely, Nogin quickly appreciated the talents of a man with sufficient contacts to gain Hughes's assurance of a visa for a Communist. Nogin barely disembarked before expressing his deep appreciation to both Gumberg and Goodrich for their part in his travel arrangements.⁹ Gumberg's ingratiating personality and excellent connections fitted neatly into Nogin's plans of finding some means for Russia to acquire large amounts of American cotton.

As grain harvests improved in Russia, peasants demanded more finished products. The New Economic Policy replaced "War Communism," which had expropriated grain during the difficult days of the civil war. With much of Russia's industrial plant destroyed in war, civil war, intervention, and haphazard nationalization, the Soviet government had to devise some means of manufac-

turing industrial goods which could be exchanged for the peasant's wheat. The none-too-subtle conflict between city and country was not resolved until the end of the decade when the state exerted, through collectivization, control over the land and converted peasants into pseudoproletarians. This issue formed an important backdrop to the power struggle that arose even before Lenin's death in 1924. During the interim, textiles played a vital role in maintaining the flow of goods between rural and urban Russia.

The Soviet government took two steps to resurrect its ravaged textile industry. First, late in 1921 officials made an arrangement with Sidney Hillman's Amalgamated Textile Workers to provide capital and technical skills for what ultimately became the Russian-American Industrial Corporation (RAIC). When Nogin visited America, RAIC operated fifteen reasonably efficient and productive textile mills. Second, Russia decided to augment its meager cotton crop by importing nearly as much of the important raw material as could be raised within its own boundaries.¹⁰ It was this second point which prompted the president of the All-Union Textile Syndicate to journey to the United States in November 1923.

If Gumberg seemed to Nogin exceptionally personable and eager to please, it was because the Russian-American had spent the previous two and one-half months trying to find some type of employment which he felt was meaningful to him personally and to his goal of assisting in the reconciliation between Russia and America. While Gumberg provided the answer to Nogin's problem of how to secure American cotton without long-term loans or Russian gold, which America refused to accept, Nogin solved Gumberg's employment problem. On December 13, 1923, Gumberg became vice president, secretary-treasurer, and director in charge of a million-dollar corporation, the All-Russian Textile Syndicate, Inc. (ARTS).¹¹ Formation of the corporation was the first serious step taken to restore Russian commercial relations with the United States. It became the means for Russia to purchase American cotton, dyes, and textile machinery.

Prior to ARTS, Russian-American trade had been conducted by a New York branch of the Anglo-Russian company, Arcos, Ltd., and by Products Exchange Company and had been so paltry as nearly to defy statistical measurement. The creation of ARTS

spawned a whole series of Russian corporations in America: Am-Derutra, Amkino, Manganese Export, Amkniga, Platinum Products, Soviet Photo Agency, Intourist, and the most important, Amtorg Trading Corporation, established on May 27, 1924. Eventually Amtorg became the principal vehicle for Soviet-American trade. However, as long as Gumberg remained in charge of the syndicate's New York office, 1923–1926, ARTS handled over 50 percent of the total turnover in Soviet-American trade and approximately 65 percent of the total American exports going to Russia. ARTS alone exported 50 percent more goods (by dollar) than the United States had exported to czarist Russia in the period before World War I. The moment Nogin arrived Gumberg knew these incredible statistics would become a reality, for the Soviet executive told him that Russia wanted to buy no less than \$50 million worth of cotton. Gumberg, who had hoped to accomplish his dream through acting as a publicist, lobbyist, and political adviser and had found these areas wanting, understood the power of money. Suddenly the vistas opened. Through business a means appeared for instantly improving Soviet-American relations.¹²

Gumberg received his position in the new corporation as a result of Nogin's appreciation for the New Yorker's abilities, knowledge, and connections. Gumberg had brought Nogin into contact with one of America's leading corporate law firms, Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett. Many of the leading lawyers and public figures of the 1920s and 1930s, including a future ambassador to Mexico (Dwight Morrow), solicitor general (Thomas Thacher), and vice president of Chase National Bank (Reeve Schley), had begun their careers with the firm. Gumberg easily engaged Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett as the general counsel for the proposed corporation, but the major stumbling block, finance, required considerable thought and negotiation late in November and early December 1923.

As long as Soviet Russia refused to honor czarist debts and to restore confiscated American property, the United States government objected to the sale of Soviet securities in America and the extension of long-term loans. Another impediment to the reestablishment of Russian-American trade resulted from the United States prohibition of the importation of Russian gold.¹³ America felt that Soviet gold had been illegally acquired from the czarist

government by an illegal regime, but such logic failed to acknowledge the simple fact that Russia was a major world producer of bullion. Rich in natural resources and only just starting to rebuild her destroyed industrial base, Russia required some type of financial flexibility in order to carry on trade. Great Britain and Germany enjoyed a considerable portion of Soviet trade principally because the long-term credits extended to Russia by British and German industrialists had the guarantee of their respective governments. One of the telling arguments Nogin used among American businessmen during his short stay was that Germany had profited considerably by acting as the middleman in Soviet commerce. Before his visit, the syndicate he headed had purchased nearly \$40 million worth of cotton through British and German middlemen.¹⁴ The Soviets, however, were enamored with American technology and productivity and in the 1920s and early 1930s desperately wanted American capital to help rebuild their industrial structure. Nogin hoped to deal directly in American cotton, to establish the credit of Soviet Russia among United States financial institutions, and thereby to expand the capital Russia could draw from America.

Through Gumberg, Nogin acquired the financial backing of Chase National Bank which facilitated the incorporation of the All-Russian Textile Syndicate. Gumberg took Nogin to visit Schley at Chase. Born in 1881, the same year as Thacher, Schley had been Thacher's classmate at Yale and had joined his friend's law firm. The year Thacher went to Russia as part of the Red Cross Commission, Schley had joined Chase National Bank, and he soon rose to an executive position.¹⁵ Fortunately for Gumberg and Nogin, Chase had placed only a minor investment in czarist Russia and thus lost little during 1918 when Soviet Russia nationalized and confiscated American properties. Furthermore, various Russian sympathizers, from the millionaire William Boyce Thompson to the counselors at Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett, had connections with Chase. Even Gumberg used its facilities for his modest savings and investments. Thus Schley was more than receptive to Gumberg's plea that Chase become the principal bank for the transaction of the proposed cotton syndicate.

Though receptive, Schley could not be irresponsible to the bank nor unmindful of American governmental policy. He re-

quested and received certain assurances from Nogin when these two and Gumberg held their talks early in December. One of Schley's demands was that the Soviet State Bank (Gosbank) guarantee the syndicate's business. This cross-institutional arrangement gave Chase some hope that it might be able to become directly involved in the financial sphere within Soviet Russia. Second, Schley wanted the syndicate to deposit with Chase \$1 million cash—subsequently ARTS supplied \$2 million. While the new syndicate secured the backing of Chase, the bank could extend only short-term credit, rarely exceeding the \$2 million paid-up stock, based on trade acceptances and warehouse receipts of such Soviet exports as furs, fish products, manganese, flax, bristles, sausage casings, and seeds.¹⁶ Through Chase and the use of receipts the syndicate received short-term credit ranging from six to twenty-four months.

Five days after the completion of the financial and legal steps leading to the incorporation of the All-Russian Textile Syndicate, Inc., Hughes sent Chicherin a telegram closing off all possibility for negotiations between Russia and America. Suddenly, Gumberg understood the importance of Soviet-American commerce. The Hughes demarche had no negative impact on the functioning of ARTS. To the contrary, the publicity on Soviet-American relations and the notoriety caused by the evident confusion of the Coolidge administration seemed to gain for ARTS additional interest from several New York financial institutions. On Christmas Day 1923 Gumberg informed Goodrich that after the Hughes statement, he and Nogin had been invited to lunch by the presidents of no fewer than four banks. While Hughes effectively blocked formal negotiations, his counterpart at the Department of Commerce was in no way reluctant to discuss with Gumberg and Nogin on January 15, 1924, the new trend ARTS presented in Soviet-American trade.¹⁷

After a whirlwind of talks with lawyers, banks, and Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, and brief visits to various southern states, Nogin departed from the United States leaving his secretary-treasurer in charge of ARTS and the New York office at 120 Broadway. Before Nogin arrived in Moscow on February 13, 1924, Gumberg saw clearing port the first ship carrying \$2 million worth of American cotton to Russia.¹⁸ He discovered a remarkable twist

in roles as a result of the new and powerful position he had acquired in an equally remarkable short span of time. After December 13, 1923, politicians and businessmen, particularly from the South, came to him instead of the reverse. He ultimately used his new position to establish more permanent relations between America and Russia than that provided by the temporary Russian need for cotton.

Few knew better than Gumberg the fickle nature of his source of power. Soviet trade practices were as alien to capitalism as Mark Twain's imaginary Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's court. In the first place foreign trade had been a state monopoly in Russia since the decree of April 22, 1918.¹⁹ It effectively removed profits from Russia's international entrepreneurs and deposited these monies in the coffers of the Soviet government. The foreign trade monopoly sanitized whatever influence foreign capital might have had on the new Communist regime. Second, Russia, similar to any developing nation, held a theory of foreign trade at variance with the prevalent ideas of the Western world. In the catastrophic economic situation Soviet Russia faced in the early 1920s, imports became essential and exports the necessary evil used to acquire vital technology and materials.

Between 1921 and 1928 Russia had a mixed economy under the New Economic Policy (NEP). No longer did the state force peasants to yield grain to feed the soldiers and workers as in the period of War Communism, a euphemism for confiscation. Small businesses flourished, and the peasant could sell a sizable portion of his produce on the free market, while the government retained the "commanding heights," i.e., operated major industries. While the NEP signaled a retreat from communism, it also marked a period when factories were organized into trusts and trusts combined into syndicates until a number of key industries possessed a type of vertical integration in the productive process that surpassed the dreams of Andrew Carnegie. Ironically, the NEP has been characterized as an economic relaxation which many in the West, particularly Gumberg's political and business associates, equated with capitalism. Yet in 1921 the State Planning Commission (Gosplan) started coordinating a fifteen year plan, GOELERO. The broad economic policy emanating from Gosplan identified imports essential

to meet Russian requirements and indicated those products which would be sacrificed as exports in order to pay for the incoming goods. In the field of international trade the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Trade (Commissariat of Trade and Industry until June 11, 1920) had overall responsibility to fulfill the plan. The commissariat completed its regulatory mission by issuing licenses and defining limits and prices to special export and import organizations. Thus the actual implementation of Gosplan occurred among the twenty-two main export-import groups such as Exportkhleb (Grain Export), Rudaexport (Ore Export), Textilimport (Textile Import), and Khimimport (Chemical Products Import).²⁰

The year 1921 also found Soviet Russia abandoning an experiment with a moneyless economy. Formation of the Gosbank led not only to the recreation in 1922 of a stabilized currency (chernovets) partially backed by gold but also to the Gosbank's becoming the agency for financing foreign trade. Soviet money had been strictly an internal currency, which could be neither sent abroad nor quoted on international exchanges. All payments from and to Russian organizations engaged in foreign trade proceeded through Gosbank. A more elaborate balancing act, however, was required in dealing with foreign trade. For example, Arcos or Products Exchange (later Amtorg) might sell x-number of dollars' worth of furs in the United States. While actually deposited in an American bank, these dollars would be "sold" to Gosbank for rubles used to pay for the furs. The same dollars would then be "purchased" from Gosbank by an importing firm and used to pay for American goods.²¹ Since Gumberg and Nogin could not defy the United States government and obtain anything more than short-term credit, the Soviet government had to be extremely careful and to maintain adequate exports to pay within six to twenty-four months for the imports. This explains why Amtorg Trading Corporation was established six months after the All-Russian Textile Syndicate, Inc., began to buy millions of dollars worth of cotton. A well-structured trading organization had to be in operation in America in order to assure adequate Russian exports to the United States.

The parent company employing Gumberg received its charter on February 28, 1922. The All-Union Textile Syndicate (vts) was, in fact, one of the first major conglomerations fashioned under the

Communist regime. Comprised of forty-two trusts and companies in the cotton, wool, linen, silk, and hemp industries, vts operated 342 factories, employed over half a million Russian workers, and controlled 95 percent of the entire textile production within Soviet Russia. Capitalized by member companies and trusts and supervised by a Managing Board in Moscow, vts served two main functions. It coordinated trade activity by distributing orders, determining prices and quality controls, and organizing the sale of textiles through 127 wholesale and retail outlets. It also purchased all raw materials and arranged storage facilities.²² Heavy demand for cotton, far exceeding Soviet production, had forced the syndicate into the world market. To facilitate purchasing, vts opened locally incorporated export firms in Berlin, London, Riga, Paris, and finally in New York.

Although Gumberg's office was the last to be established, it quickly became the most important. In the fiscal year ending on September 30, 1924, vts provided member cotton textile companies with over half a million bales of cotton. Of these bales, 38,747 originated in Persia, 48,350 in Egypt, 162,212 in Russia, and 261,600 in the United States. Even though other vts agencies in Europe acquired some 38,955 bales of American cotton, Gumberg's office supplied nearly half the entire raw cotton for Soviet Russia. The importance of these figures to the total textile industry are further revealed by the fact that in 1924 there were 202,011 cotton looms while the nearest rival fiber, wool, used only 21,165 looms.²³

For the three years Gumberg worked for ARTS, the syndicate paid \$116,815,282.42 in the total process of chartering seventy-seven ships to transport 784,193 bales of cotton as well as dyes and textile machinery to Russia. Overseeing this gigantic effort, Gumberg faced a difficult task compounded by the punctilio and peculiar specifications insisted on by the parent syndicate in Moscow. The extreme accountability of ARTS appeared in 1924 a natural concomitant to the stringent financial arrangements with which Russian trade was burdened. However, as George Herring discovered while researching his book *Aid to Russia*, this proved to be a permanent trait. Even during the darkest moments of World War II, Soviet representatives haggled, hassled, and harassed American officials interested in helping the besieged Russians.²⁴

Through these several years Gumberg repeatedly used his congenial personality to intervene between American businessmen and the syndicate's scrupulous demands. The syndicate bought only the best cotton from the best-known cotton merchants, Silvan Newburger & Son, Weil Brothers, and Anderson, Clayton & Company. To facilitate transactions, Gumberg's corporation maintained subsidiary offices in Houston and New Orleans. Frequently the syndicate used cotton purchasing experts; always cotton merchants had to submit many samples for inspection, and only a small percentage of the cotton firms offering business gained contracts.²⁵

One major problem cotton merchants learned they had in selling to the syndicate lay in the unusual specifications Gumberg had to demand for the actual bales of cotton. Russians required, in the first instance, small round bales rather than the traditional large square bales of cotton. Also, the syndicate insisted that the tare (wrapping) around the bales be reduced by 87 percent in weight. The reason for these unusual measurements had to do with Soviet Russia's tariffs. When cotton reached Murmansk, the syndicate had to pay 5.83 cents per pound. By reducing the tare weight the syndicate reduced the duty by 5 percent and by using round bales they reduced their payments another 4.43 percent. Thus, vrs saved 9.43 percent or \$2.75 off the tariff duty on each bale of cotton.²⁶ Multiplying each bale by hundreds of thousands gives an indication of the significant savings these methods brought.

Aside from these understandable changes, ARTS instructed cotton merchants in the precise methods for preparing cotton for export. They had to compress it, weigh it, sample it, compress it a second time, and be certain that no sample holes showed through the tare. The excessive ranging of the cotton induced one of ARTS major cotton merchants, Anderson, Clayton & Company of Houston, to consider seriously placing a representative at Murmansk so that the cotton could be weighed and sampled and accounts settled at the Russian port rather than in America.²⁷

Gumberg was not an autonomous self-made director of an independent corporation over which he had exclusive control. Throughout the entire period of his employment, vrs almost al-

ways maintained a Russian representative with the American branch who participated in the operation of ARTS and who received appointment on the Board of Directors. During the early period Nikolay Matveyev, president of a subsidiary trust belonging to VTS, performed this function; he was replaced later by a member of the VTS Managing Board. ARTS also had the supervision of A. M. Fushman, senior vice president in charge of purchasing, toward the close of Gumberg's employment with ARTS. While ARTS and VTS maintained an interlocking directorate, once the Amtorg Trading Corporation had been established its first chairman of the board, Isaiah J. Hoorgin, sat on the Board of Directors for ARTS.²⁸ Thus the Soviet Union kept strict control over Russian companies incorporated in the United States.

Nonetheless, as general manager of the New York office, vice president, and secretary-treasurer, Gumberg assumed a leading position and played many key roles in operating the syndicate for VTS. He coordinated the establishment of the entire American operation, which necessitated extensive traveling, particularly through the South. As treasurer, he succeeded in broadening the credit arrangement for ARTS. Undoubtedly Gumberg's fortunes had been elevated by Victor Nogin principally because of his ability to secure the financial backing of Chase National Bank. Gumberg, of course, could not acquire long-term loans, but he was able to convince other financial institutions, particularly the Equitable Trust Company of New York, to do business with ARTS. In the spring of 1925 Equitable and ARTS formed a credit arrangement after ARTS began to deposit funds with Equitable's Banking Department, and Gosbank agreed to guarantee up to 50 percent of all loans made by Equitable to ARTS. Even before the Equitable account had been started Gumberg could boast to Goodrich "that our Company was the second largest foreign borrower in the United States."²⁹

As secretary, Gumberg prepared news releases on the syndicate's activities. He was the chief public relations officer who interpreted ARTS's functions in the media. On one occasion when he visited Will Clayton in Houston, he took the extraordinary (for him) step of speaking about ARTS and Russian-American trade before

the Town and Gown Club of Rice Institute. Until the end of 1923, he had never been so consistently and frequently before the public eye. He had spent years in a seemingly fruitless back-door attempt to rejuvenate Russian-American ties. After 1923, a fourth role, pursued with relish, involved increasing public interest in recognition and trade agreements with Russia. In his press releases and interviews Gumberg always managed to point out that the millions of dollars ARTS spent on American cotton could increase many times in diverse areas if Russia could but secure long-term loans. For example, in the fiscal year ending September 30, 1925, ARTS bought \$53,349.55 worth of textile machinery. That same year Russia purchased from England \$9,262,800 worth of machinery simply because British recognition made credit more flexible. Operating without a commercial treaty, Gumberg had additional arguments to lay before the American business world. Russia levied nearly five times the normal port charges on American ships than on ships from countries with which the Soviet Union had exchanged ambassadors. Thus the ships ARTS engaged to transmit cotton to Murmansk were registered to countries other than the United States, mainly to Norway, Denmark, Germany, and Great Britain. On a less public note Gumberg reminded congressmen and senators of the information he provided to the press concerning trade. Significantly Gumberg could and did encourage cotton merchants to place the same data before their political representatives in Washington.³⁰

Just as he had done for Nogin, Gumberg assured potential Russian visitors visa documents from the United States. Had he not been able to provide this service important developments in Soviet-American trade might never have taken place. Aside from the personnel involved with VTS, Gumberg secured through Goodrich and Hoover visas for Valerion Ossinsky, former commissar of agriculture. The professor visited the United States late in the summer of 1925 to study American agricultural methods, especially the use of mechanization to increase productivity. Through Goodrich and others, Ossinsky was able to establish a dialogue with Henry Ford and J. D. Oliver, the plow manufacturer. These contacts led Amtorg to announce in October the purchase of 9,000

Fordson tractors. By 1927, 85 percent of all tractors used in the Soviet Union originated at the Ford plant in Detroit. An unusual rapport developed between Ford and Russia, based on greed and grudging respect, and continued to the late 1930s. In 1929 Ford and Amtorg signed a \$30 million pact for automobiles and assistance in establishing a plant in Soviet Russia at Nizhni-Novgorod.³¹

For the first time in years Gumberg's association with the syndicate required a singular devotion to work which prevented him from pursuing other major projects. His enthusiasm existed mainly because of the merging of avocation with vocation. Between the end of 1923 and the end of 1925 he continued his extensive correspondence and visits with longtime political and journalist friends, but his letters and discussions centered almost exclusively on the syndicate. By the end of 1925, however, the syndicate had been well established and the major battles—securing a good reputation, physical organization, and financial credits—had been won.

In 1926 Gumberg began to capitalize on a job well done and use his increasingly available spare time for related activities. Early that year he took renewed interest in the Foreign Policy Association, which sponsored in February a debate on Russia between Boris Bakhmetev, former ambassador, and Colonel William N. Haskell, former director of the American Relief Administration in Russia. Later in the year Bakhmetev faced Raymond Robins on the same topic at the annual meeting of the Academy of Political and Social Science. Robins spent much of his time after 1923 on the outlawry of war and thus leaned heavily on Gumberg for material for this debate. Robins's former secretary wrote pages of arguments and gave him sources to use at the May meeting.³²

Gumberg also continued to hold salons for writers interested in Soviet Russia. Early in 1926, at his instigation, the salon evolved into an institution, a "Committee for Recommending Books to the U.S.S.R." While Gumberg took a post with which by then he had become intimately acquainted, treasurer, the remainder of the executive board consisted of John Farrar, Clinton W. Gilbert, Horace M. Kallen, Freda Kirchwey, Robert Morss Lovett, Secretary Floyd Dell, and Chairman Mark Van Doren. The committee was es-

tablished to provide Russia with titles of American books suggested by prominent authors and critics. Initial communications with Soviet representatives were arranged by Gumberg through his old friend Alexander Yazikov, then Soviet consul general to Great Britain.³³

Gumberg's salon had expanded to include Walter Duranty, the *New York Time's* Moscow correspondent. Duranty had been covering Soviet events more sympathetically after he left in 1921 the anti-Bolshevik center of rumors in the Riga "listening post" for direct observation in Russia. Thus it was not surprising that on February 19, 1926, Gumberg held a luncheon in honor of Duranty before he departed again for the Soviet Union. What may have been surprising was that the luncheon was held at the Bankers Club. Individuals representing Amtorg, Gosbank, and Textilimport at the send-off party ate with executives of Chase National Bank, Equitable Trust Company, National City Bank, J. P. Morgan & Company, International Banking Corporation, W. A. Harriman & Company, and other companies and manufacturers.³⁴

Gumberg delivered a short oration in honor of his guest which began: "One of the most difficult tasks now confronting a person who wants to know what is going on in Russia is to weed out fact from fancy from the tremendous quantity of information that is printed in newspapers, magazines and books."³⁵ As he continued to develop these thoughts into praise for Duranty, Gumberg viewed from the dais leaders in business and finance capital. Perhaps he himself paused to reflect on his own fortunes. In a little over two years he had immersed himself in the inner sanctum of America's financial structure. Partially through his own endeavors he saw capitalist and Communist sharing a meal, common interests, camaraderie, a link in the human spirit. Perhaps, too, Gumberg reflected that the years he had spent in the political and literary world trying to redirect American foreign policy went for less than seeing the one-to-one relationship between Russian and American. Even in the absence of trade agreements and recognition, Gumberg managed to aid in establishing relations between two countries. After years of apparent failure between 1918 and 1923, he must have attained a certain sense of satisfaction in noting the beneficial results of renewed Russian-American trade by 1926.

Before the year was out, his work in establishing ARTS completed, Gumberg resigned. But the direction taken in November and December 1923 marked a permanent change in his life and a permanent change in the methods he used to bring America and Russia nearer to one another. After 1923 Gumberg chose business relations as the principal vehicle to accomplish the goal of his life's work.

9

THE IMPRESARIO



BY 1929 THE UNITED STATES government had been bypassed in the realm of Soviet-American relations. Despite nonrecognition, relations existed on a nearly normal scale. The two countries exchanged news services, business and cultural representatives, books, and ideas, and unofficial consulates busily worked in the capitals of both nations. Alexander Gumberg stood astride this activity, an impresario conducting, planning, and strengthening Russian-American affairs.

Between 1926 and 1929 Gumberg helped revive the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, create the American Society for Cultural Relations with Russia (USSR), advise Chase National Bank on Russian commerce, and establish through dinners, tours, conferences, and cultural exchanges a means for bringing Russians and Americans together. Gumberg's failure to influence the government sharply contrasts with his success in the private sector. Although he maintained excellent rapport with James P. Goodrich, William E. Borah, Dwight Morrow, and J. Reuben Clark, the government's view of Russia remained unchanged. As a result, like old and exasperating acquaintances, the problems of Soviet gold, visas, and finance imposed themselves with frustrating regularity immune to solution. Washington's arcane position left the American government in the unenviable role of an obstacle blocking normal communications and commerce.

During the 1920s American antipathy toward Soviet Russia hardened and became institutionalized within the Departments of

State and Commerce. The anti-Bolshevik chic fossilized with modest alteration, measured only by degrees of intensity for the next half-century. Important policymakers associated with Woodrow Wilson instinctively feared bolshevism, less for reasons of economic ideology than for the apparent anarchy of Soviet Russia contrasted with the orderly reform of America's Progressive Era. In the succeeding administration, President Harding's lackluster leadership permitted an ideologue, Herbert Hoover, to fill an intellectual and power vacuum left by Harding and to place America's non-recognition policy in negative terms of Capitalism versus Communism. Ably supported by Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes (to 1925), Hoover's negative attitude toward bolshevism percolated through the government.¹

The feudalistic structure of bureaucracy allowed little room for opposition. Individuals employed by the State Department and possessed of a refreshingly flexible mentality, such as Morrow and Clark, were limited in the scope of their influence. There is no better example of the pervasiveness of blinding ideology than that provided by President Coolidge's second secretary of state. Despite governmental restrictions on Russian gold, securities, and long-term loans, Frank B. Kellogg unabashedly informed the chairman of the Republican National Committee in 1928: "As concerns commercial relations between the United States and Russia, it is the policy of the Government of the United States to place no obstacles in the way of the development of trade and commerce between the two countries."² Only a rascal or a person infected by an idea system could make a statement which added plus one and minus one to get two.

Gumberg and his former employer Boris Skvirsky understood in 1923 that the anti-Soviet policy either was or might become a semipermanent fixture with the American government. No other reason satisfactorily explains why Skvirsky bothered to erect an institutional clearinghouse for information about Soviet Russia. By the same token, Gumberg's drift into the realm of Soviet-American trade reveals his concern to establish a means to counter governmental opposition to the Soviet Union. He thought renewed and lively commercial relations would raise American business pressure against governmental trade and recognition policies. For

three years Gumberg played an exciting part in the reconstruction of Soviet-American trade through his work for the All-Russian Textile Syndicate. Although trade increased in the mid-1920s, Gumberg discovered that the Departments of State and Commerce had not budged in their Russian views. Through his knowledge of the complex structure surrounding Russian trade, Gumberg realized that ARTS, once established, had become a stagnant organization. Indeed, by 1925 any dramatic improvement in trade could come only after the American government lifted restrictions against Soviet gold, securities, and long-term loans.

Few knew better than Gumberg the debilitating effects of America's trade restraints. He worked assiduously to gain more banking facilities for ARTS. The syndicate suffered from the exceptionally tight loan situation even with Gumberg's connection with Chase National Bank. Chase gave ARTS a clean line of credit for \$500,000 and, by using cotton as collateral, 80 percent of the invoice value of \$2 million worth of cotton. Until ARTS produced cash or warehouse receipts from Russian imports, Chase frequently owned cotton awaiting Russian shipment. By a special convention signed between Chase and ARTS, shipping time was actually used as a means of credit extension. Under this arrangement, a shipload of cotton purchased on Chase credit enroute to Murmansk would stop at Bergen, Norway, and await its release by Chase after satisfactory payment arrangements had been made. For an export company purchasing \$40 million worth of cotton a year, this was insufferable. Trade existed on a day-to-day basis. Once minimal credit had been established Gumberg saw that the future expansion in Russian-American trade depended entirely on a revision of American policy. In order to accomplish this end and further facilitate trade, Gumberg and Reeve Schley of Chase National rejuvenated the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce in June 1926. By then Gumberg and Schley had become more than just casual business acquaintances whose relationship was cemented by mutual commercial interests. The previous year Gumberg and the vice president of Chase had gone to Russia.³

For the first time since 1918 Gumberg had been able to secure the necessary travel papers. Thomas D. Thacher, then judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York,

personally intervened with British Military Control to gain Gumberg's transit visa through Great Britain. Until the day before Gumberg left America aboard the *Majestic* on July 3, 1925, he could not be certain Great Britain would provide the needed documents. Gumberg's problem with British officials is not revealed in his correspondence, since the matter received partial settlement through oral discussions with the British consul in New York City. However, the available evidence suggests that the British government confused Gumberg's identity with an active but unidentified Bolshevik revolutionary. The British may have thought Gumberg was Michael Borodin. This is suggested by a minor State Department investigation conducted in 1927 to confirm that Gumberg was not the infamous activist for the Communist International in China.⁴

Frankie accompanied her husband along with Schley's wife and son and Lamar Fleming, a cotton merchant. Once in London, Gumberg's party increased with the addition of William Henry Chamberlin. After a short visit in London and Paris the group departed from Riga on July 31 for Moscow in a private car Gumberg secured through Amtorg. Goodrich joined them in Moscow. Gumberg devoted most of his month-long stay in Russia to the business affairs of ARTS, renewing old friendships (Alexander Yazikov happened to be in Moscow at the time), visiting family, and interceding with Commissar of Foreign Affairs George Chicherin on behalf of a constituent of Senator Borah. Soviet officials undoubtedly encouraged Gumberg and Schley to find some means to change America's trade policies. Whether they discussed resurrecting the moribund American-Russian Chamber of Commerce is unclear. Nonetheless, that the Soviet government demonstrated continued high interest in furthering credit arrangements with America is evidenced by Gumberg's appointment as United States representative for the Commercial and Industrial Bank of the USSR (Prombank).⁵

When Gumberg's group returned to America in mid-September, the *New Yorker* orchestrated a campaign, as he had done so often before, to eliminate those remaining obstructions to Soviet-American commerce. He consolidated his business and political connections by suggesting Schley meet Borah. He then called on Hoover on September 19, 1925, for a two-hour interview

to whet the secretary's appetite over America's prospects in Russia. At the same time, Albert H. Wiggin, president and chairman of Chase National Bank's Board of Directors, was urged to give a luncheon for Wall Street financiers on behalf of Schley. The vice president used the luncheon to inform America's banking interests about trade with Russia. Finally, through Hoover, Goodrich gained an interview with President Coolidge and told him: "The nations of the world have tried political ostracism, blockade, invasion and support of counter-Revolutionists in Russia. . . . isn't it just possible that a different line of action, the manifestation of a more tolerant spirit toward a people struggling towards the light, might not only help the progress going on, but tie to America in the years to come a people that are naturally friendly with us and trust us?"⁶

While governmental officials seemed favorably disposed to current developments in Soviet-American trade, no change was made in American policy. The ideological paths of the government confused and perplexed Gumberg. Hoover told Gumberg that he regarded Russian-American commerce favorably, that he knew about Russia's economic progress under the New Economic Policy, and that he was quite aware of existing American handicaps to further progress in this trade. Yet the secretary did nothing to reduce those handicaps.⁷ Eight years after the Bolshevik insurrection, anti-Sovietism had been institutionalized to the point where not only recognition but apparently even small adjustments in American trade policy could not be effected.

Gumberg patiently waited over the winter of 1925–1926 for the government to demonstrate some change as a result of his fall campaign. Time forced him to reconsider his approach. Like his former employer, Skvirsky, Gumberg came to appreciate the possibilities of the institutional approach to change American policy. In March 1926 he began to prod Allen Wardwell and Schley to re-suscitate the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce as a means to improve Soviet-American relations and to counter the obstinate position of the Departments of State and Commerce.⁸

Gumberg could not have chosen a more opportune moment to push for the institutionalization of Soviet-American commercial relations. Although the total turnover in American trade with Russia

remained slight in comparison with that of other countries, the sharply upward swing between 1923 and 1925, due primarily to ARTS, presented a tantalizing picture to American businessmen. The value of American exports to Russia between 1923 and 1925 jumped from \$7.5 million to nearly \$69 million. Admittedly Great Britain and Germany accounted for almost half of Russia's total trade, but by the end of the fiscal year 1925 the United States briefly held third place despite impediments and nonrecognition. Furthermore, export figures indicated to the Western businessman that Lenin's New Economic Policy had been a success. In the first four years of NEP the value of Russian exports jumped by over two billion rubles with the share in the value of manufactured products over food and raw materials moving from 27.1 percent to 44.2 percent. These advances made Russia appear to be an exciting country, ripe for enterprise.⁹

Aside from the impressive trends in Russian trade, Soviet officials eased their concession policy. After 1923 American companies contracted to develop Russian industry or to extract natural resources discovered that, although they could never acquire property rights absolutely, the Soviet government subordinated its anticapitalist pretensions to promise American and foreign concessionaires ample profits. With rare exceptions, American concessionaires and all types of businessmen learned that the country which sponsored international communism also upheld contracts with capitalists.¹⁰

Finally, Gumberg's decision in regard to a chamber of commerce was timely because all other organizations which aspired to foster Russian-American commerce were moribund. The American-Russian Chamber of Commerce had been incorporated in 1916 to promote economic relations between America and czarist Russia during World War I. Besides Chase National Bank, the chamber contained major financial firms such as the House of Morgan, National City Bank, and New York Life Insurance Company. Except for Chase National, members had lost millions of dollars due to Soviet Russia's confiscation policy. Understandably, the chamber converted into a staunch supporter of the government's antirecognition policy. Only two and one-half years before Gumberg urged New York businessmen to resurrect the chamber, he

considered it a hopeless propaganda front for the Russian embassy and former Ambassador Boris Bakhmetev.¹¹

Actually, Gumberg erred. While the chamber opposed, after 1917, both trade and recognition, its enigmatic position became too much to bear for its leaders, especially its president, former Secretary of Commerce William Redfield. In 1923, when Gumberg had sought American recognition of Russia, Redfield had offered the services of his organization to send a group to Russia and reopen communications without forcing the government into any official comment. The State Department quickly rejected Redfield's suggestion.¹² Without any reason to exist, the chamber quietly disbanded. At the time, Gumberg and other Soviet sympathizers chalked up the chamber's demise as a negative victory.

After 1918 the unusual position vis à vis Russia held by the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce left a vacuum in the institutionalization of commercial relations. In 1919 the American Commercial Association to Promote Trade with Russia attempted to fill the void. Led by Emerson P. Jennings of Lehigh Machine Company, the association tied itself closely to Ludwig C. A. K. Martens, the hapless Soviet representative forced to flee America in 1921 before his scheduled deportation. Martens liberally engaged numerous small firms, including Lehigh Machine Company, in contracts based, however, on an alteration in American trade and recognition policies. When Martens left America, the contracts he had let out became null and void. Jennings failed, in a personal trip to Moscow, to persuade Soviet leaders to honor the agreements. The contracts, including Lehigh's multimillion dollar deal for printing presses, were canceled. When Jennings left Russia empty-handed in the summer of 1921, the American Association to Promote Trade with Russia died from financial embarrassment and wounded pride.¹³

Before the Gumberg-Schley alliance guaranteed the reestablishment of a trading organization, Armand Hammer's Allied-American Corporation partially fulfilled the original goals of the groups headed by Redfield and Jennings. Shortly after Jennings left Russia there arrived a young American physician, Hammer, who, despite his original interest in saving Russian lives during the famine, accepted a concession to operate an asbestos mine. Soviet

authorities accorded Hammer special treatment, allowing him and his family corporation to trade without the immediate supervision of the Commissariat of Foreign Trade. Through offices in Moscow and New York, Allied-American became a type of chamber of commerce promoting the interests in Russia of thirty-eight major companies. In 1924, however, the Soviet government began to restrict private trading institutions and Hammer moved on to secure a pencil concession which ultimately made him a millionaire.¹⁴

Gumberg's timing, his employment with ARTS, and his association with several important financial and business concerns placed him in perfect position to act as a catalyst for the renewal of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce on June 11, 1926. His suggestion naturally received support from cotton firms, from banks such as Chase National and Equitable Trust, and from the law firms of Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett and Davis, Polk, Wardwell, Gardiner & Reed. More importantly key directors of the old chamber found it convenient to take a leading part in the reorganizational move: Vice President Maurice A. Oudin of International General Electric, Vice President Charles M. Muchnic of American Locomotive, W. A. Harriman of W. A. Harriman & Company, H. H. Westinghouse of Westinghouse Air Brake Company, and W. H. Woodin of American Car and Foundry Company. Although most of the individuals and firms had been a part of the original chamber, they each found it more profitable to accept Russian contracts than to castigate Soviet Russia. Schley presided over the revised chamber and Gumberg's comrade from the Red Cross Commission, Allen Wardwell, was vice president. Gumberg quickly took an active part in coordinating the chamber's activities with Soviet institutions and with the International Chamber of Commerce. His work received acknowledgment by his selection to the Board of Directors the following year. He kept his position with the chamber for the remainder of his life.¹⁵

At one of the first meetings of the chamber held in the Bankers Club on July 23, 1926, Schley spoke on the organization's purpose: "I want to emphasize the fact that this Chamber has been revived for the sole purpose of fostering trade and commerce between two of the greatest nations of the earth. That is its only function. So long as the present Board of Directors has anything to do with it, it

will not become a political debating society.”¹⁶ Clearly the chamber did not want to become embroiled over recognition, but it did become an important lobby with the American government to reduce trade restrictions.

The New York offices, first at West Fifty-seventh Street, then 50 Broad Street, and finally on 261 Fifth Avenue, maintained a library of statistics on Soviet-American trade. For the one hundred dollars contribution members received regular bulletins on Soviet production, exports, railway operations, finance, sailings between the countries, names and dates of Soviet representatives coming to America, names and dates of American businessmen going to Russia, plus a wide variety of special reports dealing with every aspect of Soviet economic life from the addresses of Soviet syndicates to governmental regulations. Besides economic news, the chamber provided other important services such as visa applications, customs, travel, and hotel information for members visiting Russia.¹⁷

Significantly, the chamber established a Moscow office and representative shortly after reorganization. In March 1926 when Gumberg began to urge Schley and Wardwell to revive the chamber, he had also been receiving letters from Charles H. Smith, pleading with him to find a suitable position for the then financially embarrassed mining engineer. Like Hammer, Smith's career bordered on the exotic. Originally part of the Inter-Allied Railway Commission which attempted to maintain Siberian railroads during the intervention period, Smith remained in Russia to try a variety of financial schemes including the operation of a gold mining concession in the area formerly occupied by the Far Eastern Republic. By the mid-1920s the State Department had written off Smith as a bad risk, if not an outright Communist. The department had a penchant for considering any individual to be a Communist who advocated closer commercial and political relations with Russia. In the case of Smith, however, they may have been right. He belonged to the short-lived Peasant International.¹⁸

During the spring of 1926, Smith was in Paris, in between concessions. Gumberg tried to get him a job with W. A. Harriman & Company, among others, but Smith possessed too much sympathy for Soviet Russia to be a trusted employee for any major American firm. While Smith's reputation had suffered in America,

however, he still had Moscow's trust. The previous summer Chicherin had expressed to Gumberg his interest in the mining concessionaire. When the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce reorganized in June and considered opening a Moscow office, Gumberg advanced Smith's name as the best candidate for the post. In July 1926 Schley announced the chamber's intent to open a Russian branch. Shortly thereafter Smith became a vice president of the chamber and went to Moscow. For a gold mining engineer, Smith's modest salary of \$7,500 reflected a decline in fortunes, yet on balance he performed well for the chamber. He spoke Russian, he was familiar with the process involved in securing concessions and trade agreements, and he had good rapport with Soviet officials.¹⁹

At first, the Moscow office remained independent of the Soviet bureaucracy. The chamber rented its own office and hired a stenographer. By 1929, however, it had become a financial burden for an organization with only 156 members. Chase National repeatedly lent money to the chamber to keep it financially operational. Late in 1929 the Moscow office moved from its Spaso-Peskovsky address to occupy a room with the USSR Chamber of Commerce for the West. The USSR chamber also provided the services of Tatiana Sofiano, an expert translator and statistician. This gracious and friendly gesture by the Soviet government revealed its extreme concern to improve commercial relations with the United States.²⁰ Regardless of where the office existed, the chamber's Moscow connections played a vital role in fostering Russian-American communications. It was also the first such organization to keep a Moscow post.

Early in 1928 Smith returned to the United States for a series of speaking engagements sponsored by the chamber. Shortly thereafter he undertook one of the more extraordinary assignments to arise in Soviet-American relations. From the United States and through Smith in Moscow, Gumberg promoted the publication in Russia of a yearbook. It contained a complete directory of members of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, advertisements from United States manufacturers, and a statistical abstract on American industrial developments, prepared by economist Rexford Guy Tugwell. As Gumberg boasted to the Department of

Commerce, "This is the first time such a book has been published in Russia." Although printed in the summer of 1929 in a limited 2,000 copy edition, the free volumes reached syndicates, trusts, banks, trading organizations, managers of industrial plants, technical schools, economic publications, and various Soviet governmental departments dealing with trade. Gumberg learned shortly after publication that several Russian universities used it as a handbook on America.²¹

The book, Smith's salary, and the separate Moscow office placed the chamber \$12,000 in the red by 1929 and nearly bankrupted the organization. Fortunately for the chamber, Gumberg streamlined and reorganized the Moscow facilities. By 1929 his associate from the Special Trade Delegation of the Far Eastern Republic, Alexander Yazikov, had been appointed a director of the USSR Chamber of Commerce for the West. Gumberg arranged for the American office to move in with the USSR chamber in the Moscow Commodity Exchange Building off Ilinka Street, to use the latter's personnel, and thereby to save considerable money. In the shuffle, the American chamber requested Smith's resignation.²²

The request did not please Soviet officials. Gumberg wrote Yazikov that he "always tried to protect Smith's interests," but members felt Smith was not "energetic enough for the job." More than likely, members of the chamber found Smith too energetic—overly enthusiastic in support of the Soviet Union. Once the American organization demonstrated its adamant position toward Smith, however, the USSR chamber agreed to the resignation on condition it share in the decision on Smith's replacement.²³

After an extensive selection process, the Moscow office reopened under the direction of Spencer Williams, a thirty-two-year-old native of Utica, New York. Williams had been a correspondent for many newspapers. In 1925 he joined the staff of the *Daily News Record* where he specialized in Russian-American textile news and became an ally of Gumberg. Williams had traveled extensively throughout the Soviet Union. His experience, knowledge of Russian-American trade, and association with Gumberg guaranteed his new position, which he held throughout the 1930s. Since the 1929 yearbook proved such a financial burden, the chamber waited two years before completing another such project. In 1931

the chamber published an *Economic Handbook of the Soviet Union* and a similar volume in 1936, both designed for the American, not Russian, businessman.²⁴

During the same period that Gumberg urged the reorganization of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, he undertook a number of personal projects to improve Soviet-American relations. An author-lecturer, Sherwood Eddy, led a small group of writers and businessmen to Russia in the summer of 1926. Gumberg answered their inquiries and staged a luncheon for Eddy on the author's return.²⁵

Another writer, Upton Sinclair, had quite a different problem. He wanted Gumberg to ask a Moscow associate to go to the office of the State Publishing House (Gosizdat) "and punch the manager once or twice." While Soviet Russia awarded patents and copyrights to citizens, the USSR did not adhere to international copyright conventions. As a result, Sinclair discovered his works were being pirated. Worst of all, he sent Gosizdat a manuscript, *Oil*, and learned it had been published without so much as a word of thanks. Justifiably upset, Sinclair asked Gumberg and Gumberg's friend from *Novy Mir* days, Alexandra Kollontai, then a Soviet diplomat, to intervene. Within a short period, Sinclair received a check for \$2,500. Gosizdat also agreed to use a member of Gumberg's salon, Albert Rhys Williams, as Sinclair's literary agent. Williams was then in the USSR writing his book *The Russian Land*.²⁶

Several years later Sinclair became embroiled in another controversy involving the Soviet Union. He backed the production of Sergei Eisenstein's movie "Thunder over Mexico."²⁷ The movie turned into a financial nightmare for Sinclair and an artistic fiasco. In 1925, however, the Soviet producer created a classic, "The Cruiser Potemkin," a film depicting a Russian naval mutiny which occurred during the disturbances against the czarist government in 1905. Gumberg loved movies. He may have become enchanted with them when he distributed films for the Committee on Public Information in Russia over the winter of 1917-1918. Gumberg went so far as to buy his own equipment and subject his friends to homemade movies he had taken of Russia. In July 1926 Amtorg received a single print of "Potemkin." When Gumberg learned of the film he became an impresario arranging for acquaintances and the

American-Russian Chamber of Commerce to view it as well as taking the movie to Washington, where he arranged its preview by the Overseas Writers' Association.²⁸

Gumberg achieved a modicum of success in strengthening Soviet-American relations in a variety of ways. Late in 1926, however, an old problem—visas—reappeared to haunt him. In May 1925, when Gumberg asked Goodrich to secure State Department approval for Valerion Ossinsky's visa, there occurred an easing of travel restrictions against Russia. The general counsel for all Russian businesses in America, Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett, received permission to apply directly for documents for Russian businessmen through the United States consul general in Berlin.²⁹ On balance, the alteration of State Department policy seemed minor. Nevertheless, by early 1927 several hundred Russian representatives had been able to visit the United States without any embarrassing advance in the activities of the American Communist party.

The stratagems of Gumberg, Goodrich, Thacher, and Schley and the revival of Russian commerce signified by the All-Russian Textile Syndicate prompted the normalization of travel arrangements. However, the change in American policy did not indicate a lessening of American ideological objections to Soviet Russia. A particularly instructive illustration of the capriciousness of the "new" policy within the American government arose in the case of George L. Piatakov. Former chairman of Gosbank, chairman of Chief Concessions Committee, and vice chairman of Supreme Economic Council in charge of all manufacturing industries, Piatakov directed the Russian Commercial and Industrial Bank. In the late fall of 1926, the Soviet government decided that Piatakov should go to America and take complete charge over all Russian business interests. Since Gumberg had been appointed Piatakov's representative, it seemed natural that he should handle Piatakov's travel arrangements. As in the case of other prominent Soviet visitors, Gumberg tried to prevent the American bureaucracy from impeding an important development in Soviet-American relations. On November 11, 1926, he wrote Dwight Morrow, formerly with Thacher's law firm, a J. P. Morgan partner, and classmate of President Coolidge at Amherst. Gumberg asked Morrow to talk with

State Department officials and find out the climate of opinion in regard to Piatakov's application.³⁰

Early in December, when Morrow returned to New York from one of his frequent journeys to Washington, he suggested that Gumberg talk to Assistant Secretary of State Robert E. Olds. Three days later, December 7, Gumberg entered Olds's office carrying with him letters of introduction from Morrow, Thacher, and Alexis V. Prigarin who had replaced Isaiah J. Hoorgin as chairman of Amtorg Trading Corporation. Morrow wrote Olds that he felt "confident that Mr. Piatakov's presence here would not be embarrassing to our government and would be of great assistance in developing trade with their country, particularly the export of cotton." Armed with documents, arguments, and statistics on Soviet-American trade, Gumberg talked at length with Olds and found him very cordial. After this first exchange Olds asked Gumberg to return later in the day for his decision in the matter. Gumberg reappeared that afternoon and received Olds's assurance that the Piatakov case would be settled favorably. Later, Gumberg told Morrow that the assistant secretary of state promised he would send necessary instructions to America's consul in Berlin.³¹

Two days after the interview, Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett received a letter from Coert du Bois, chief of the Visa Office, permitting them to make direct contact with Berlin. As a result, on December 11 the law firm cabled the American consul, requesting approval of Piatakov's application. The procedure followed policy established in May 1925, even though Gumberg thought the application had been approved during his meeting with Olds. The du Bois communication worried Gumberg who asked Morrow to telephone the assistant secretary of state and confirm that Piatakov would have no difficulty once he entered Berlin.³²

Toward the end of January, Piatakov left Moscow and made reservations to sail for the United States on board the *Mauretania*. Then on January 29, 1927, Prigarin opened a cablegram from Piatakov which stated that the American consulate had refused his visa application. On Morrow's advice, Gumberg and a member of the Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett firm went immediately to Washington to confer with Olds and du Bois. They were horrified to learn that Olds had not given the Berlin consul any instructions

and that diplomatic decorum prevented Olds from reversing the consul's decision. While Piatakov cooled his heels in Berlin, Gumberg tried every maneuver possible to get the American government to reverse the decision. Gumberg failed, so a red-faced Piatakov meekly returned to Moscow in mid-March. As a consolation, Piatakov became Soviet ambassador to France and then in 1928 resumed his old position as director of Gosbank.³³

Gumberg had decided to resign from ARTS long before the Piatakov affair had run its dismal course. That fiasco reconfirmed, though, a conclusion he had reached during 1926. Although revived, Soviet-American trade had reached a plateau beyond which it could not go unless the American government took positive steps to alleviate trade restrictions. As a result Gumberg's new association with the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce had far greater potential for the improvement of American-Russian relations than his employment with ARTS.

Gumberg officially left ARTS on December 15, 1926. As usual in such affairs, newspapers and journals of commerce recorded the event, providing ARTS with as much publicity as the acclaim Gumberg received for his services. Undoubtedly he accepted with far greater appreciation the numerous warm letters from business associates and former employees. Cotton merchant Silvan Newburger wrote sadly, "I don't know of anything that has happened in the business world that has upset me more than the report of you severing your connection with the All-Russian Textile Syndicate, Inc." Will Clayton of Anderson, Clayton & Company, exclaimed that ARTS's good reputation had been due to Gumberg's "wise and equitable administration of the Syndicate's affairs." Weil Brothers, the merchants, had been impressed by Gumberg's "courtesies" and his "frank and open manner."³⁴

Shortly after Gumberg's departure, these major cotton firms did indeed have good reason to be upset, to miss Gumberg's equitable administration and his courtesies. In the succeeding year, Russian members of ARTS became more irascible than ever, instituting a new policy of purchasing small quantities of cotton from large numbers of merchants. Without Gumberg's soothing personality to maintain order and efficiency, internal squabbles abounded in the ARTS organization and resignations became commonplace.³⁵

Concurrent with his resignation, announcements went out publicizing Gumberg's new connection. On January 1, 1927, he became vice president and a director of the United States Company. Half-jokingly, the *New Yorker* told Schley that his new job meant that "in addition to all my other ideals I will add the American and universal (except Russia [*sic*]) ideal of trying to make money." The United States Company was an investment firm and precursor of Atlas Corporation. Except for Richard B. Scandrett, Dwight Morrow's brother-in-law, the other board members represented a type of alumni association for Thacher's law firm and included Schley, George H. Howard, L. Boyd Hatch, and the guiding spirit, Floyd B. Odum. Gumberg received \$7,200 per annum plus a negotiable sum for any business he originated. Unlike his change in jobs in 1923, Gumberg had his new association well in hand before officially terminating his position with ARTS. He and his wife took a two-week vacation at the Florida home of Raymond and Margaret Robins before Gumberg began his new employment on January 3.³⁶

Gumberg returned to New York ambitious to keep his solid business reputation. Yet, strangely enough, he was relatively silent about his new job in the days and weeks that followed. Exactly three months after he assumed the vice presidency of United States Company, he told Robins that he had wanted to write him "for a long time but was hoping to accumulate some good news. . . . My present job has not been working out well. The principal man in our organization with whom I was to work in European business resigned. . . . As a result of this change I have been making plans which may take me to Russia."³⁷

Three weeks later, April 22, 1927, Gumberg boarded the *Majestic* for a voyage that would take him to Paris, Geneva, and Moscow. Since Gumberg's services to his company depended upon the development of European investments, the resignation Gumberg referred to in his letter to Robins cut the Russian-American adrift. Gumberg gravitated to his primary connections—those with Soviet officials. The various investment schemes he proposed while in Moscow in the first part of June failed. There was a fleeting prospect of forming a company to handle storage for American cotton. The warehouse company never materialized.³⁸

The multifaceted Gumberg rarely involved himself in only one project at a time. His Moscow visit, seemingly unfruitful, showed results nonetheless. He acted as a direct liaison between the New York and Moscow offices of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce. He assisted Colonel Hugh Cooper in negotiations for the famed Dnieper Dam project. Shortly thereafter the Hugh L. Cooper & Co., Inc., engineers of Wilson Dam at Muscle Shoals in America, received a Soviet contract to supervise the 650,000 horsepower dam project. Gumberg also interviewed Olga Kamenev, wife of Soviet leader Leo Kamenev and president of the USSR Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. Treasurer of the Committee for Recommending American Books to the USSR, Gumberg had been empowered by the committee he helped found to discuss the activities of the American group with Olga Kamenev.³⁹

Earlier that year Kamenev requested that the Americans not only suggest titles but actually mail copies of the recommended books to Russia. Her inquiry caused a stir. Secretary Floyd Dell, radical journalist for the *Liberator* and later the *New Masses*, expressed doubts to Gumberg whether "ALL the Goddam [*sic*] books in that list" could be sent. An emergency meeting was held in February at Gumberg's apartment. Apparently Gumberg and his friends succeeded in raising a considerable sum. By mid-summer the *Weekly News Bulletin* of Skvirsky's Russian Information Bureau reported that the Book Exchange Bureau of the USSR Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries had received over 14,000 books from the American committee. Since Dell admitted to having only two dollars for the purchase of books, Gumberg and the others must have contributed sizable amounts of money.⁴⁰

The principal issue Gumberg and Kamenev discussed was the establishment of an American branch of her society. Shortly after Gumberg returned to New York his committee joined in the formation of the American Society for Cultural Relations with Russia (USSR). In the new group Wardwell replaced Gumberg as treasurer, Lucy Branham took Dell's post as secretary, and Dell became vice president with John Dewey and Lillian D. Wald. The executive committee was chaired by Graham Taylor, who had unsuccessfully tried to get Gumberg to join him on the unofficial commission to Russia in 1922.⁴¹

Gumberg's European junket passed, as he told Thacher, like a "whirlpool" in meetings with Soviet European ambassadors, the commissar for foreign affairs, the new commissar for foreign and domestic trade, Anastas Mikoyan, and representatives of the USSR Chamber of Commerce for the West. Of all his varied activities in Europe in 1927, perhaps the most interesting occurred before he reached Moscow. Armed with letters of introduction from Morrow, Borah, and others, Gumberg made contact with Henry Robinson, chairman of the American Delegation to the Economic Conference meeting in Geneva in May. Through Christian Rakovsky, then Soviet ambassador to France, Gumberg also contacted the chairman of the Soviet delegation, Valerion Ossinsky. In this fashion Gumberg, as an intermediary, established an informal dialogue between the two groups.⁴²

In mid-May, he hosted a private dinner whose guests were members of the American delegation: Robinson, Norman Davis, Alonzo Taylor, and Arthur Bullard (in charge of publicity), and Soviet representatives Ossinsky, Gregory Sokolnikov, former commissar of finance, and L. M. Kinchuk, deputy commissar of foreign affairs and president of the USSR Chamber of Commerce for the West. The occasion marked the only time in the latter half of the 1920s when responsible officials of both countries sat down to investigate the wide range of problems and differences separating their governments. As reported to the State Department, the dinner turned out to be exceptionally pleasant. Afterwards, Gumberg's guests broke up into three groups. Davis and Bullard talked with Ossinsky about ideological questions and the activities of the Communist International. Robinson queried Sokolnikov on the internal economy of the USSR. Taylor and Kinchuk conferred on Soviet-American commerce. While Gumberg situated himself perfectly to be the liaison for official relations, inflexible ideological postures prevented this remarkable conference from becoming the first stage toward recognition.⁴³

Gumberg returned to New York at the end of June 1927. He carried with him communications from Soviet banking officials to Schley. In succeeding weeks he prepared a number of memoranda for Schley concerning the financial condition of the USSR, the textile industry in particular, and the Soviet political situation which then

existed in a state of flux—ultimately Stalin resolved the interparty strife under his stern direction.⁴⁴

Because Schley held posts with Chase, United States Company, and American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, the Gumberg-Schley alliance caused Gumberg's role to blur among those three organizations. Increasingly Schley relied on Gumberg for the chamber's operation and for advice on Russian business. Eight months after Schley gave a welcome-home party for Gumberg, the latter resigned his post with the United States Company to accept an \$18,000 per annum job as Russian expert for Chase National Bank.⁴⁵

In the latter half of 1927, the only operation Gumberg undertook which clearly involved the United States Company was an investment scheme to underwrite the purchase of American textile machinery for Russia. Late in the summer and early fall two groups of Soviet visitors arrived in the United States. The first, led by Leonid Serebriakov, Gumberg's close friend and assistant commissar of transportation, received special attention from Gumberg and members of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce.⁴⁶ The second, a purchasing commission from the All-Union Textile Syndicate (vts) arrived with the intent of placing large orders for textile machinery. Two Soviet engineers accompanied A. M. Fushman on a tour of plants before deciding to place a preliminary order in excess of \$1 million for textile machinery with the Saco-Lowell Shops of Boston.

Fushman demonstrated why he subsequently became vice president of the USSR Bank of Foreign Trade. He developed an intriguing plan for circumventing the American government's stricture against long-term loans. The Boston company agreed to break down and separately finance seven shipments of the \$1,217,518 order with each six-month loan subject to at least three renewals. In this fashion vts conceivably could have accomplished the financing well beyond the maximum of twenty-four months, since the separate shipments would span the better part of a year.⁴⁷

While Fushman's financial legerdemain was impressive, the contract went unsigned because of a fundamental problem—money. vts wanted 100 percent credit and left it to Saco-Lowell to worry about cash. Foreign Sales Department Manager J. F. Hovey

asked Gumberg to try and raise the capital. The United States Company, however, pledged only \$100,000. A pair of Gumberg's acquaintances, including Goodrich, offered an additional \$75,000 so Gumberg fell short by over a million dollars. Late in December, another purchasing commission left Moscow, this time for England where the textile machinery could be bought on credit with long-term loans.⁴⁸

The collapse of the Saco-Lowell contract underscored the continuing problem of financing Soviet-American trade. In the previous fiscal year (1926-1927) the USSR had amassed an unfavorable balance of trade totaling \$62,985,900. Since the time when Gumberg assisted in the reconstruction of Russian-American commercial relations, Soviet Russia had accumulated an American trade deficit exceeding a quarter of a billion dollars. Such statistics, considering the dependency on short-term loans, are amazing. Naturally, Soviet Russia tried numerous plans to gain sounder credit arrangements. In 1926 Gumberg's friend Wardwell of Davis, Polk, Wardwell, Gardiner & Reed attempted an indirect scheme. Representing W. A. Harriman & Co., Inc., Wardwell's firm asked the State Department whether Harriman could extend long-term credit to a consortium of German banks and industries doing business with Russia. The ruse failed. Leland Hand of the State Department advised Harriman's counsel that the \$25-35 million loan would not find "favor at the present time" with the American government. Another indirect attempt to garner long-term credit was tried two years later. Gosbank issued railway bonds and convinced several American banks, including Chase, to act as agents for redeeming the interest coupons. The State Department opposed even this relatively harmless plan.⁴⁹

In 1927 the direct approach received no better treatment. Serebriakov sought to buy railroad equipment through Charles Muchnic of American Locomotive Sales Corporation. The purchase would have necessitated bank financing for a minimum of five years. In a particularly revealing statement, Robert Olds informed Muchnic that "no restrictions are imposed upon the carrying on of trade and commerce with . . . the Soviet regime." One breath later the State Department official stated: "The Department has objected, however, to financial projects involving the flotation of

loans." Two years later the same Muchnic, then vice president of Baldwin Locomotive Works Company, signed a contract with Amtorg made possible by a system of revolving credit.⁵⁰

Not all officials concerned with American foreign affairs possessed the ideological myopia of the State Department. The agent general for reparations, S. Parker Gilbert, whom Gumberg met through Morrow, felt the United States could play a stronger role in maintaining German reparation agreements by supporting Russo-German trade. Germany needed access to the Russian market in return for raw materials and grain. In January 1928 Gilbert asked Gumberg to use his influence with Chase to form a consortium of American and German banks which would finance Russo-German trade.⁵¹ The concept appeared so similar to the unsuccessful Harriman proposal of a year and a half earlier that it never moved beyond the planning stage.

A month later still another project arose in the continuing drive to stimulate Soviet-American trade. Through Gumberg, Schley, Amtorg, and a representative of Gosbank, Vitaly S. Korobkov, Chase and Equitable Trust agreed to act as agents for Soviet gold. Gosbank's German correspondent, Garantie und Kredit Bank fuer den Osten, shipped \$5 million in gold bars from Hamburg. It arrived in New York on February 21, 1928. News items about the gold appeared in the American press before it arrived. Immediately Undersecretary of the Treasury Ogden Mills made an inquiry with the State Department over what the Assay Office should do in the event Gosbank or Chase and Equitable sought to exchange the gold. The State Department confirmed the position against accepting Soviet gold, outlined in 1920. Due to Soviet Russia's confiscation policy America did not purchase gold which might be subject to litigation. The USSR made a major blunder or an audacious challenge to American policy. It sent gold stamped with its own seal. Although the USSR annually produced 30,000 kilograms of gold, Schley had hoped the USSR would send bars acquired through trade and still bearing the seal of governments other than Soviet Russia.⁵²

The American government may have played an unconscionably foul trick on the public in order to ease the criticism arising out of the gold affair. On March 5 the French ambassador informed

State Department officials that Bank of France intended to sue those parties claiming ownership with the Assay Office. During World War I France had purchased fifty-two million francs of Russian gold which remained with the czarist government. The following day the American government issued a press release. It offered to accept the gold if Chase and Equitable would change their status from agents to owners by purchasing the gold from Gosbank. Naturally, the banks, subject to litigation for six years, refused, outwardly placing the onus on Chase and Equitable.⁵³

The gold controversy of February–March 1928 illustrated the type of government obstacle Gumberg could not hurdle in placing Soviet-American relations on a sounder footing. The refusal of the Assay Office to accept Soviet gold, based primarily on ideological considerations, ignored the very real fact that millions of dollars worth (estimated in excess of \$350 million) of Soviet gold entered America through third parties such as Germany, Sweden, and Great Britain. Ideology, in this particular case, did irreparable damage to American foreign trade and may have served the purpose of a foreign power, France. Between May 1925 and February 1928, the gold turnover handled by Gosbank exceeded \$100 million. Yet the Bank of France did not threaten lawsuits against this activity with any other country except the United States.⁵⁴

France made a triple play by taking advantage of American ideology. First, no other government which recognized Soviet Russia would have supported French claims. Second, the French government, still negotiating with Soviet Russia over wartime gold, used the controversy in America to embarrass and pressure the Soviets for favorable terms. Third, France had no intention of seeing Soviet-American trade dramatically increase from those levels already attained after 1923. Such an increase might come at the expense of Franco-Soviet commerce. In March, the Bank of France initiated a lawsuit with the United States District Court, Southern District of New York, to take possession of the Soviet gold. The Bank of France, however, could not prove that the gold was the same as that held by the Imperial Russian Bank on behalf of Bank of France during World War I. Gosbank, in contrast, submitted evidence that the gold had been smelted and assayed between 1925 and 1927. If the case had continued, it seemed likely

that Gosbank would have won. The Soviet government, though, could not afford the luxury of tying up \$5 million in gold. Early in April Gosbank asked Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett to ship the gold back to Germany effectively ending the suit.⁵⁵

Gumberg and other individuals and institutions did not give up the fight for Soviet gold. The American-Russian Chamber of Commerce approved a resolution calling for a change in American policy. Chase National and Equitable Trust continued their communications with the Treasury Department hoping to reverse the March decision. By May the new chairman of Amtorg Trading Corporation, Saul G. Bron, reported that in the previous twelve months the Soviet's unfavorable balance of trade with America reached a whopping \$90 million. In press reports, published May 5, Bron optimistically spoke of adjusting the deficit by importing no less than \$30 million in Soviet gold. A few days earlier Gumberg visited Mexico City to enlist Morrow's support in persuading the State Department to remove the various restrictions, including those on gold from Soviet commerce. The only bright sign, however, occurred in the summer when J. Reuben Clark, Morrow's protégé, replaced Robert Olds at the State Department.⁵⁶

Through the summer Gumberg continued to present reports on Soviet Russia's trade to Chase. His contacts with ARTS and Amtorg placed him in an excellent position to advance Chase's interests. Gumberg knew, for example, the tentative plans for Soviet purchases before the Soviet fiscal year began. The financing of Soviet trade, however, remained a key problem. For that reason, and to study the general economic conditions of Russia, Gumberg left New York for that country on August 16, 1928.⁵⁷

Unlike his other journeys, Frankie did not accompany her husband on the voyage. She had left in May for an extended European vacation. After spending a few days in Paris and Berlin, Gumberg joined his wife on September 1 in Moscow. The first week of his stay in the Soviet capital passed by in a nonstop series of meetings with Korobkov, Kinchuk, Vice Premier and Commissar of Communications Yan Rudzutak, and the acting commissar of foreign affairs, Maxim Litvinov. The latter had been particularly eager to glean Gumberg's views on the forthcoming election. It seems that the Russians assumed that a victory by Herbert Hoover

would lead to at least the removal of the more onerous trade restrictions. Gumberg wrote Schley after the Litvinov interview: "Too bad Russians cannot vote in the coming elections, otherwise I think Hoover would get a lot more votes."⁵⁸

On September 8 the Gumbergs and Leonid Serebriakov began a four-thousand-mile journey through the southern heartland of Russia. While Serebriakov acted as a guide, Frankie took charge of the movie camera and Gumberg sat back to enjoy the scenery as they traveled by boat and rail to Kazan, Saratov, Stalingrad (formerly Tsaritsyn, now Volgograd), Rostov, Kharkov, Odessa, Kiev, and back to Moscow. His travels and talks with Soviet officials prompted Gumberg later to write down his observations in a memorandum, "Stability and Solvency of the Soviet Government," copies of which went to Chase National and Gumberg's Wall Street, congressional, and State Department acquaintances.⁵⁹

Aside from high finance, Gumberg had a more mundane mission on behalf of Schley. At the time of his visit, Moscow's Grand Hotel served patrons their meals on czarist china and the proletariat customers availed themselves of napkins embroidered with the Romanov crest. Schley, USSR's American banker, wanted more than anything else for Gumberg to purchase a set of these mementos.⁶⁰

While in Moscow, Gumberg had another unusual request. Boris Pilnyak, famed Soviet author, stopped by to see Gumberg. The writer anxiously hoped to visit America but could secure permission only if invited by a foreign organization friendly to the USSR. Gumberg contacted Lucy Branham and Floyd Dell and got the necessary invitation from the American Society for Cultural Relations with Russia (USSR). Over two years passed before the required arrangements allowed the writer to come to the United States. Red tape in both countries and a book Pilnyak wrote, *The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea* (1930), ill received by Soviet critics, delayed his travel plans. Not until April 1931 could Gumberg hold a dinner-reception for Pilnyak in New York. Unlike his friend Robins, who devoted an excessive amount of mental and physical energy to the cause of prohibition, Gumberg joyfully allowed himself the pleasure of maintaining the Russian tradition for imbibing strong drink. The dinner-reception Gumberg sponsored took place

in a speakeasy. Besides the entire staff of the *Nation*, a large number of liberal writers attended the underground party and spent the evening in a freewheeling debate on the freedom of artists under capitalism and communism.⁶¹

Gumberg returned from his lengthy Russian visit in mid-October 1928 in time to enjoy the last battles fought during that great American spectator sport, the election of a president. While Hoover's victory gave hope to a number of Soviet sympathizers and Soviet officials that a new direction might be taken toward Russia, Gumberg possessed more reserve, a caution built upon years of fruitless work. He solidly based on logic the limited optimism he revealed to Walter Duranty, when he wrote the *New York Times* correspondent that Hoover as president might change United States policy but only because the former secretary of commerce had committed himself to the development of America's foreign trade. Furthermore, Gumberg dismissed as pedantic the speculation over Hoover's choice for secretary of state. He told Duranty that whoever assumed those duties "will be carrying out Hoover policies."⁶²

Nonetheless, Gumberg and his political and business acquaintances were tantalized by the prospect of Morrow's appointment to direct the State Department. Gumberg had an opportunity to discuss this possibility with the ambassador when he spent Christmas Eve in the Morrow home in Englewood, New Jersey. Exactly one month later, January 24, 1929, president-elect Hoover talked with Morrow about the same subject. Morrow's biographer, Harold Nicolson, implied that the ambassador's successes made him too powerful for Hoover's liking. It would appear that Hoover, through compliments, maneuvered Morrow into remaining at his Mexican post. Shortly thereafter, the press announced Hoover's designation of Henry L. Stimson for the post. Those Americans sympathetic to improved Soviet-American relations greeted the appointment with mixed feelings. Goodrich could not imagine a better choice; Robins characterized Stimson as a mindless puppet for the ideas of Elihu Root and Charles Evans Hughes. Gumberg acknowledged Hoover's dominant personality and remained neutral.⁶³

The USSR chose the transitional period between the administra-

tions of Coolidge and Hoover to send Gosbank executive A. L. Scheinman to America. Invited by Chase National Bank, Scheinman eagerly undertook the journey, apparently accepting his government's delusion that a change in American presidents portended a change in policy. As usual Gumberg did considerable legwork to assure some modicum of success for the visit. Five days before Scheinman arrived on January 9, 1929, aboard the *Mauretania*, Gumberg went to Washington to set up appointments for the bank executive with Senator Borah and J. Reuben Clark. Gumberg spent an hour with Clark in an open-ended conversation on Russia. As he later told Schley, Clark impressed Gumberg by his opposition to the Treasury Department's ruling on Russian gold. Gumberg also talked with Assistant Attorney General John Marshall. He asked Marshall to ride with him to the dock and smooth wrinkles raised by Immigration.⁶⁴

Accompanied by Serebriakov, Scheinman discussed business with Chase National. He took time out to attend a dinner given in his honor by the Council on Foreign Relations. Then on January 17 Scheinman went with Gumberg to Washington to meet with several government officials with whom Gumberg had secured appointments. Gumberg accomplished all that he could under the circumstances. He left Scheinman in Washington and took a brief Florida vacation, driving down with Senator Robert La Follette and meeting Frankie, who had arrived earlier, at Robins's estate. In terms of intergovernmental relations, the Scheinman visit was insignificant. The transition between administrations permitted less, not more, room for change. In addition, Scheinman soon discovered that he was personally involved in a different type of transition. Three months after Scheinman talked with Clark, George L. Piatakov replaced Scheinman as vice commissar of finance and chairman of Gosbank. Discussions in the private sector, however, made Scheinman's journey worthwhile. Gumberg established, in January and February, a series of meetings and luncheons between American railroad executives and Scheinman and Serebriakov. One result of those discussions occurred on April 12, 1929, when the Soviets signed a technological and sales agreement with Baldwin Locomotive Works.⁶⁵

Gumberg did not dwell on the inability of Scheinman to effect

a change in American policy. He had been justified to place his trust in business. When Jerome Davis called on Borah to start a new congressional movement for reconciliation with Russia, the senator informed the scholar on March 20 that American business, not Congress or the government, held all the initiatives.⁶⁶

In seeming confirmation of Borah's opinion, the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce approved a month later the sponsoring of an extravaganza in Soviet-American relations—a huge delegation of American businessmen to Russia. From July 16 to August 15, ninety-five Americans traveled nearly six thousand miles by train, steamer, and automobile through the Soviet Union. Never had such a large excursion been undertaken, and as a result the chamber and the push for better trade relations with Russia received considerable play in the American press. This was not a group of radicals. The delegation contained mainly executives, including nine millionaires, socialites, such as Rosemary Bauer, Alice De Lamar, and Mabel S. Ingalls, niece of J. P. Morgan, and journalists including the *Nation's* editor, Oswald Garrison Villard, and *Brooklyn Daily Eagle's* associate editor, H. V. Kaltenborn. The junket had been carefully timed to follow the meeting of the International Chamber of Commerce held in Amsterdam July 8–13. Because the delegation consisted of so many prominent leaders in industry and communications, Gumberg, who directed the affair, worked out the logistics of the trip in minutest detail.⁶⁷

Gumberg developed the initial plans with American Express, Amtorg, Am-Derutra, and Intourist before mailing out over one thousand invitations in May. While Hannah Pickering, the chamber's New York secretary, handled much of the mail, Gumberg carried on a voluminous personal correspondence to guarantee the delegation a large representation. On June 19 he and Frankie sailed for Europe, arriving in Paris on June 26. In Paris, and later Berlin, he made the preliminary visa arrangements which the Foreign Office confirmed after he reached Moscow on July 2. As soon as he stepped off the train, the USSR Chamber of Commerce for the West invited him to a meeting. The Soviet chamber and Gumberg, using the list of businessmen who accepted the invitations and would shortly arrive with the delegation, prepared a series of interviews, conferences, and receptions. Later, when the

group entered Soviet Russia, they were greeted by five official receptions and conducted through a series of conferences in which twenty-two separate business contracts between Americans and Russians were discussed. Due to Gumberg's groundwork with the Soviet chamber, the delegation later had the opportunity to exchange ideas on Soviet-American trade with Vice Premier Rudzutak, Gosbank President Piatakov, Commissar of Foreign Trade Mikoyan, Chairman Leo Kamenev of the Chief Concessions Committee, and various members of the Supreme Council of National Economy including F. F. Kilevitz, who also directed the All-Union Textile Syndicate.⁶⁸

Until Gumberg left Moscow for Berlin on July 10 to meet the delegation, he spent his time with Intourist completing special accommodations for the group. Through Gumberg's foresight, the delegation suffered few annoyances. It could exchange currency in hotels, experienced minimal customs inspection (none whatsoever when it departed), could use cameras without censorship, and, by an agreement between TASS and Associated Press, received daily stock market quotations, baseball scores, and other news from America. The American chamber also provided the group amenities such as American coffee, cigars, and cigarettes. Gumberg's arrangements were topped off by the receipt of a luxury train from the Soviet government for the delegation's use throughout their journey. Pulled by two engines, the train had eight sleeping cars, two diners, service and baggage cars, plus an ice car to keep the Prohibition-ridden Americans delightfully refreshed. The mahogany-trimmed cars contained fans, showers, and a battery of valets and attractive female translators who surprised the businessmen by refusing, as bourgeois decadence, all tips.⁶⁹

Small wonder that when the delegation completed the grand tour of Russia, all the businessmen, socialites, and journalists expressed favorable views toward American recognition of Soviet Russia. Considering the apolitical nature of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, Gumberg's report carefully explained that he had nothing to do with press reports recording the delegates' opinions. When the delegation returned to Berlin in August, several correspondents conducted an opinion poll. A surprising result from the inquiry was that fully one-third of the well-heeled group

felt the United States should exchange diplomatic representatives with the Soviet Union without any preconditions over debts and confiscation. An additional third believed the only precondition to recognition should be Soviet Russia's repayment of the Provisional government's debts to America.⁷⁰

It would be grossly erroneous to claim that the delegates based their conclusion on Russia from a balanced, reasoned, or even knowledgeable vantage point. The entire trip smacked of a Hollywood spectacular staged to entertain without any real substance. It would be equally wrong, though, to ignore the favorable impression these leaders in business and public opinion brought back with them to America. The businessmen represented an impressive list of American corporations such as Westinghouse, Gillette Safety Razor, Remington Rand, Underwood, Cowham Engineering, and International Business Machines. Fourteen participating firms did not even belong to the American chamber. Many of the businessmen secured a good return for their thousand-dollar ticket. Negotiations for contracts were actually completed, in two cases, during the hectic thirty-day marathon—Austin Company for the construction of the Nizhni-Novgorod Ford facility and Westinghouse for the electric equipment in the Stalingrad Tractor Plant.⁷¹

The 1929 delegation marked the halcyon days for Alexander Gumberg as the focal point in Soviet-American relations. He moved with ease among governmental circles in America and Russia, his presence received appreciative welcome from economic strategists in New York and Moscow, and the list of opinion-makers with whom he communicated contained all the principal leaders of American liberal journalism. When Louis Fischer turned from newspaper work to writing his history, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, he first turned to Gumberg.⁷² By the end of the 1920s all the strands of Soviet-American association seemed to pass between Gumberg's fingers. Finally, Gumberg's influence had a strong impact, through his work for Chase National and the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, on changing the climate of business opinion about Russia.

10

RECOGNITION



IN 1930 JOHN REED'S ghost rose from the grave and struck, through Veniamin Gumberg, one last dreadful blow at his nemesis, Alexander Gumberg. The Communist party's folk hero nearly accomplished by memory of his greatness what he failed to achieve during his lifetime—permanently labeling Gumberg a counter-revolutionary. Veniamin reconciled himself with the Bolsheviks after November 7, 1917. In the Russian civil war he worked as special quartermaster supplying a Red Army division with food and supplies. His beneficial service received due reward during the NEP reconstruction period with an appointment as head of Amtorg's German equivalent, the Russian-German Trading Company. By 1930 Veniamin's German connections, particularly in chemicals, prompted his elevation to vice president of Soviet Russia's Chemical Syndicate.¹

Veniamin would have been the first to admit that he could not have predicted his subsequent career on November 7, 1917. On that date he held the military rank of captain and more importantly functioned as secretary of the Menshevik party's Military Section. Shortly after noon Captain Gumberg bumped into John Reed, as the correspondent rushed up and down Nevsky Prospect trying to determine whether the Bolsheviks had begun their bid for power. Reed had just arisen, since he had not left Smolny Institute until 4:00 A.M. The last person Reed talked to had been Zorin Gumberg, who informed the excitable journalist that orders had been issued for the Red Guards to occupy the state bank and telephone and

telegraph exchanges. Appropriately the first person Reed talked to when he got up was the eldest Gumberg brother. Breathless and agitated, Reed eagerly asked Veniamin about the insurrectionists' progress. " 'The devil knows!' " Veniamin answered in typical Gumberg fashion. " 'Well, perhaps the Bolsheviki can seize power, but they won't be able to hold it more than three days. They haven't the men to run a government. Perhaps it's a good thing to let them try—that will finish them.' " ²

Unfortunately for Veniamin and Alexander, Reed recorded Captain Gumberg's views in *Ten Days That Shook the World*. On February 8, 1930, *Pravda* published an attack on Veniamin, based on Reed's observations. Written under the pseudonym L. Ninin, the article led to Veniamin's removal from power. Stalin had imposed a new revolution—collectivization and five year plans—on Russia. A premium on allegiance to the party and its dictator produced fear and permitted a macabre upward mobility in Russia's economic system to those willing to unseat their superiors by questioning their Communist integrity. L. Ninin, apparently one of Veniamin's employees, accomplished his goal. He not only quoted Reed but connected Veniamin with the ousted followers of Trotsky.³ Zorin had already been eclipsed by his ties with Stalin's opposition. It now became Veniamin's turn to join his youngest brother in Soviet Russia's version of purgatory—the unperson world of prisons, camps, and labor battalions.

These calamities would not have moved beyond the level of a family tragedy had Ninin not linked Alexander with Veniamin in a conspiracy to gain riches off Soviet Russia's proletariat. In the lengthy diatribe against Veniamin, Ninin mentioned Alexander, "who grew rich, became naturalized in America, and who had the audacity to come to Moscow as a representative of American firms. Of course this is a family affair: did the two brothers meet in Moscow, and if they did, what was their brotherly conversation about?" ⁴

News of these slanders first reached Alexander through the dispatches of American correspondents in Moscow. On February 11, 1930, Gumberg handed Reeve Schley two letters of resignation: one for his position as Chase National Bank's consultant on Russian business and the other as director and member of the execu-

tive committee of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce. He later explained to Louis Fischer that he could not function to improve Russian-American relations while his reputation suffered from Soviet innuendos. "It would be absolutely impossible," wrote Gumberg, "for me to do any work unless this story is repudiated."⁵

Aghast at these developments, Schley called for a meeting with Gumberg and Peter G. Bogdanov, chairman of Amtorg Trading Corporation, in the Chase National Bank on February 13. Schley expressed dismay with the *Pravda* article and refused to accept Gumberg's letters of resignation. He told Bogdanov that Gumberg possessed such integrity that his word was "absolutely good" on Wall Street and in Washington. In addition, as ARTS financial adviser, Schley knew Gumberg had not profited from his direction of that corporation. Schley handed Bogdanov a letter demanding a full explanation.⁶ The same day Thomas Thacher, shortly appointed solicitor general of the United States, also gave Bogdanov a letter. Since Thacher helped incorporate ARTS and had been a director, he could vouch for Gumberg and stated:

He not only managed the business with extraordinary skill and ability, purchasing cotton well below the average of the market price, but in his dealings and contacts with American bankers and merchants succeeded in establishing a reputation for honesty and fidelity which in my opinion has contributed more than any other thing to the creation of credits since extended to the Russian agencies in this country. . . . Under these circumstances I cannot believe that such irresponsible statements could have been published in the "Pravda". . . . I am not only concerned because of my knowledge of the great contribution which Mr. Gumberg has personally made to the establishment of friendly trade relations between this country and Russia, but looking to the future and to the success of your efforts toward the same end I am greatly concerned lest such statements should destroy his usefulness and embarrass your efforts.⁷

Messages piled on top of one another in the effort to clarify Gumberg's position and clear his name. Bogdanov hastened to cable his government. He could not afford to lose his lawyer and banker. Boris Skvirsky and Harold Kellock assured Robins that

Gumberg had not been purposefully discredited. Kenneth Durant of TASS wrote indignant letters to United Press International for distorting the Gumberg story in American news releases. Gumberg himself communicated at length with Leonid Serebriakov, Alexander Yazikov, and George Melnichansky, chairman of the All-Union Textile Syndicate. Not only did important people in America exert their influence on Soviet representatives but American journalists in Moscow spoke up against *Pravda's* slander. Fischer told Gumberg "that the whole matter of Soviet-American relations cannot remain unaffected. To many people, like Borah, Dwight Morrow, Robins, Governor Goodrich and lesser figures you are Russia, and that you should be so disgracefully disavowed and covered with mud will not reflect credit on the ways of the authorities here."⁸

Before the end of February, Bogdanov received a cable from the Commissariat of Trade expressing the "high regard" Soviet Russia had for Gumberg. Vice Commissar L. M. Kinchuk urged Gumberg to compose a statement refuting the charges; the government would see to its publication in *Pravda*. For several days Gumberg prepared his response which he handed to Bogdanov for retransmittal on March 7.⁹ Exactly one month later it appeared in *Pravda*. Gumberg's letter stated:

In the "Pravda" of February 8th there appeared an article signed "L. NININ," in which although my name is not mentioned, there is a statement which refers to me and also to my work in the New York office of the Textile Syndicate. I consider it necessary to make public certain facts, which prove the absolute falsity of Ninin's statements and the entire lack of foundation for his insinuations concerning me.

The Textile Syndicate never sent me to America, where I resided since 1903. In the fall of 1923, V. P. Nogin, with whom I became acquainted in America upon his arrival here for the organization of purchases of cotton in the American market, requested me to take charge of the organization of the American offices of the All-Russian Textile Syndicate, and appointed me its managing director. I occupied that position for a period of three years, when I resigned of my own accord.

I visited Russia during the Revolution, spending a year there from May, 1917 until May, 1918. At that time I was connected with the American Mission of Red Cross to Russia under the command of Colonel Raymond Robins. I did not visit the U.S.S.R. from May,

1918 until July, 1925. In 1925 I spent a month in Moscow on the business of the All-Russian Textile Syndicate. Since my resignation from the All-Russian Textile Syndicate in December, 1926, I have visited the Soviet Union on three different occasions—in 1927, 1928 and 1929. All my trips to the U.S.S.R. were well known to the Soviet authorities. During each visit I had occasion to meet and discuss American business with leading officials of the Commissariat of Trade, the State Bank, the Textile Syndicate, and various other Soviet commissariats and institutions. I always enjoyed the most courteous reception from the representatives of Soviet institutions with whom I came in contact. My last visit to the U.S.S.R. was in the summer of 1929, when I went with the American Business Delegation, organized by the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce. As a Director of the Chamber, I took a most active part in the organization of the Delegation, and did so at the invitation of the People's Commissariat of Trade. During my visits to the U.S.S.R., I had occasion to give out interviews to the Soviet press, which were published both in Moscow and provincial newspapers.

My reputation in the business circles in America and in the U.S.S.R., and my many years of work in connection with the development of economic relations between America and the U.S.S.R., make it unnecessary for me to make any further reply to misleading insinuations contained in Ninin's article. But in view of the fact that a reference was made to my work for the Textile Syndicate, I will quote an extract from a letter written to me by Victor Pavlovich Nogin, then the Chairman of the All-Russian Textile Syndicate. This letter is dated January 31, 1924, and was written by him while en route home: "I would like to tell you as I am nearing Russia—and I already feel myself close to Russia although we are now only coming to England—that I am deeply gratified and happy that I have met you: my meeting you I regard as fortunate for the Textile Syndicate and myself."

I also quote the text of a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the American office of the All-Russian Textile Syndicate, in connection with my resignation on December 15, 1926: "Resolved that Mr. Gumberg's resignation as a Director and an Officer of this Corporation be and it hereby is accepted with regret, this Corporation taking this occasion formally to express in its records and to Mr. Gumberg its appreciation of his singularly distinguished and able services rendered since its incorporation in establishing its business and credits."

This resolution was adopted unanimously, and was introduced by I. I. Yonov, who succeeded me as the head of the American office of the A.R.T.S. after my resignation, and it was seconded by A. V.

Prigarin, who at that time was the head of Amtorg, and who was also a Director of the A.R.T.S., Inc. I do not doubt that the Board of Directors of the All-Union Textile Syndicate in Moscow will now also confirm this statement in regard to my work for the Syndicate.¹⁰

The extraordinary length to which individuals in America and Russia went to clear Gumberg's name and to guarantee publication of his letter attest to the high esteem he enjoyed in both countries. Soviet and American officials recognized Gumberg as the principal agent for improved relations. Had his reputation been destroyed much of his work would have perished as well. Gumberg's exoneration kept Soviet Russia's most effective defender at his station with the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce. He did, however, resign his job with Chase National Bank at the end of the following year.¹¹ Ironically, it would not be Soviet, but American, events which indirectly forced his resignation from active participation in Soviet-American commerce.

Following the stock market crash of 1929, a new insecurity crept in with the economic decline. The retreat businessmen effected to maintain their solvency directly affected the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce. While the organization remained viable, members could no longer afford frivolity. Tours of Russia planned by Gumberg and the chamber in 1930 and 1931 had to be canceled due to nonparticipation.¹² Member firms welcomed the existence of the chamber's Moscow office and sent representatives directly to Moscow when warranted, but the days for extravagant delegations touring Soviet Russia had passed.

More importantly, Soviet-American trade—particularly exports to the USSR—declined steadily as the depression worsened. Amtorg purchased 60 percent less in 1931 than in 1930. Gumberg's strategic position as liaison between Chase and various Soviet trading organizations enabled him to be one of the first Americans noting the new trend. He blamed the fact that "Russian business of the Bank has been declining" for his letter of resignation to Schley. The same reason explained why Schley surrendered his directorship of the chamber to Hugh S. Cooper, elected president by the Board of Directors at a meeting held in the Recess Club on November 21, 1930.¹³

The precipitous reduction in Soviet purchases of American products can be explained in a number of ways: American trade restrictions remained; Soviets obtained easy credit from England and Germany; declining Soviet exports made difficult the purchase of American products. Gumberg, however, believed the "great turmoil" in America damaged Soviet-American commerce. The agitation grew after a consecutive series of attacks by the American press, private groups, and public officials against the USSR, beginning in 1930. Soviet Russia may have used trade as punishment for American actions.¹⁴

In May 1930 a New York police commissioner released documents linking Amtorg Trading Corporation with subversive propaganda against the American government. Ten years earlier Soviet sympathizers would have cringed and barricaded themselves from the inevitable onslaught of anti-Communist hysteria. By 1930, however, Gumberg's work with business and government permitted a strong counterstroke. Thacher had been appointed solicitor general; Robins regularly lunched with President Hoover; Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson formerly worked with Thacher in New York; Dwight Morrow entered Republican politics and possessed national fame from his Mexican ambassadorship; and the chamber kept in close touch with the United States Department of Commerce. The chamber sent a committee, led by Cooper and Allen Wardwell, to discuss Amtorg's activities with Secretary of Commerce Robert P. Lamont on May 27, 1930. Lamont agreed with the chamber that Amtorg operated legitimately for the benefit of commerce and did not aspire to lead a revolution against the American government. Accompanying the committee to Washington, Gumberg took the opportunity to call on Undersecretary of State Joseph P. Cotton. The State Department official revealed that neither he nor Russian Division Chief Robert F. Kelley had to be convinced that the New York police commissioner distributed forged documents. Although the government dismissed the matter, New York Congressman Hamilton Fish conducted hearings into Amtorg, keeping the anti-Soviet flame burning brightly.¹⁵

On July 1, 1930, a bombshell blew the lid off Soviet-American trade. Customs authorities temporarily held up cargoes of Russian

pulpwood based on the recently enacted Hawley-Smoot Tariff. Section 307 allowed the United States to embargo goods produced by convict labor. Trade with Russia had already come under a strain when Andrew Mellon, secretary of the treasury, criticized the Soviet practice of dumping cheap matches on the depressed American economy. Finally, on July 25 Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Seymour Lowman banned outright all Soviet pulpwood and Treasury officials hinted that most other Soviet products including matches would be forbidden.¹⁶

Regrettably many Americans linked the dumping charge to a Communist plot to undermine the weakened capitalist system. Allegedly Soviet convict labor provided the USSR a means of exporting large quantities of cheap raw materials and finished products. At the time, too few people stopped to realize that Soviet exports either did not compete with American products or did not enter America in sufficient quantity to be measured in anything more than a fraction of 1 percent in terms of American production or total imports. Matches, however, were different. Soviet Russia had dumped large quantities of matches on the American market in 1929 and early 1930—as had all match-producing countries in order to avoid high duties imposed by the 1930 tariff. Yet Russian matches accounted for less than 10 percent of all match imports. In addition, Russian matches did not compete with any existing American product, but rather with matches produced by an international cartel, headquartered in Sweden, which controlled 80 percent of the world market.¹⁷

The American-Russian Chamber of Commerce naturally had a better grasp of Soviet-American trade patterns. Gumberg and the other directors decided on July 30, 1930, again to exert their influence with the government. That same day a special committee composed of Cooper, Lamar Fleming, and S. R. Bertron sent telegrams to Mellon, Lamont, and Hoover. The government agreed with the chamber's view that an investigation should be conducted before an arbitrary decision prohibited any Soviet product. Within a week after Lowman issued his statement, the famous pulpwood entered American ports. Even though Hoover spoke against an embargo of Soviet goods, the Treasury Department retained the right, upon complaint, to challenge any ship carrying Soviet prod-

ucts and left it to importers to prove convict labor had not been used.¹⁸

The resulting uncertainty caused irreparable damage to Soviet export groups and American importers while generally wreaking havoc with Soviet-American trade as seen in the case of pulpwood. The USSR lacked shipping and chartered foreign steamers. At the time Lowman banned pulpwood twenty-three ships destined for America were either being loaded at Archangel or on the high seas, and forty-three more ships had been chartered. Freight charges accounted for 45 percent of the pulpwood's value and Soviet export organizations had to pay 50 percent of the shipping charges in advance. Even the slightest delay spelled financial disaster. These ships could not be diverted to European paper markets because American importers demanded cords four feet in length or six inches longer than that required by European paper manufacturers.¹⁹

Paradoxically the decline in trade eased recognition three years later. As early as August 1930 Gumberg wrote Fischer that the press had not been eager to jump on the anti-Soviet bandwagon when the Fish committee investigated Amtorg. As the American economic system declined further, the value of Soviet trade increased in the eyes of many American businessmen. The American-Russian Chamber of Commerce gained strength with the addition to its Board of Directors men representing important corporations: Radio Corporation of America, General Motors, International General Electric, Socony-Vacuum, Chrysler, and Thomas A. Edison. The lure of Soviet trade tantalized businessmen to the point where Gumberg and other board members agreed to canvass in December 1932 American firms on the question of recognition. The "overwhelming expression" in favor of "official diplomatic and trade relations" led the Board of Directors to reverse the chamber's 1926 decision on recognition. The chamber's press release, issued July 13, 1933, argued that "early recognition, to be followed by the negotiation of an equitable trade agreement, would make it possible to obtain a very substantial share of these [Soviet] orders for American industry in time to put many thousands of our unemployed back to work before next winter. This much needed employment for our labor cannot presently be obtained, however,

except by the extension of reasonable governmental or private credits, or a combination of both."²⁰

Gumberg so identified his lifelong goal with the Republican party that he participated in only a minor role when recognition finally took place. Had President Hoover not restrained his secretary of state when Stimson investigated the issues two years earlier, Gumberg might have had the opportunity to render more immediate service. Stimson's concern with Japan's occupation of Manchuria presented a golden opportunity for *realpolitik*. The idea of checking Japanese Far East adventures formed an important backdrop for recognition when President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent Soviet Russia a message calling for negotiations on outstanding problems between the two countries on October 10, 1933.²¹

Three days later Raymond Robins entered the White House for a brief chat with Roosevelt in support of recognition. The two men discussed the areas that particularly concerned the president, Communist propaganda and freedom of religion. Gumberg had set up the appointment through Philip La Follette, former Wisconsin governor.²² Progressive Republicans, the La Follette brothers enjoyed a close relationship with Roosevelt during the early New Deal period. Like Robins, Philip had recently visited Soviet Russia and public conjecture placed both men high in the field of candidates for the first ambassador to the USSR.²³ Subsequent to Robins's interview with Roosevelt the documents leading to recognition exchanged by Roosevelt and then Commissar of Foreign Affairs Maxim Litvinov dated November 16 did include communiqués promising freedom of religion for American nationals in Russia and forbidding Third International activities in America. It would be wrong, however, to credit Robins with any direct influence on negotiations. Rather, Robins was part of the long list of Gumberg associates who wrote, called, telegraphed, or personally told Roosevelt of their support for recognition.²⁴

Probably Roosevelt, conscious of public opinion, had greater respect for the work of Gumberg's acquaintances Wardwell, Cooper, William N. Haskell, Thomas W. Lamont, and others on the Committee on Russian-American Relations of the American Foundation. The committee queried a thousand newspapers to

discover American opinion about recognition. Their findings, released a week before Litvinov arrived on November 7, demonstrated that 63 percent of the newspapers favored recognition; only 26.9 percent opposed it outright. Significantly the question used—"Does your paper favor or oppose the recognition of Russia?"—contained an explanatory note which stated that "recognition" meant the immediate exchange of ambassadors without preconditions.²⁵

Unable to contribute to the immediate decisions regarding recognition, Gumberg continued as the impresario bringing Americans and Russians together. He organized a testimonial dinner for Maxim Litvinov on behalf of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce held in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel a week after recognition had been accomplished. Robins delivered the principal address. He expressed the sentiment of Gumberg's heart when he began: "For sixteen long years we have waited for this hour." Robins went on to outline the benefits diplomatic relations offered both countries and to praise Soviet progress in adversity. The colonel did not dwell on the long struggle nor did he lay any laurels for himself or others. Privately he praised Gumberg:

Congratulations old Comrade and dear friend for this culmination of your wise, brave, unflinching labors for the common good of your homeland and your adopted country. From the first hours of the travail and birth of the Soviet Government . . . yours has been the wisest and most constructive mind in American-Russian relations. I have I think been familiar with most of your undertakings in the behalf of Russian-American trade and diplomacy, and always you have understood the essential elements and held a realistic attitude to the facts of the situation. If justice were done in this curious world of cross purposes and false values, you would wear on your breast *both* the Order of Lenin and the Distinguished Service Cross of the United States.²⁶

Oswald Garrison Villard thought Robins should have spoken of those journalists who fought for recognition but told Gumberg: "Otherwise I congratulate you upon the occasion, and the deserved tribute to you personally. You certainly are entitled to every

honor, and as for seeing the captains of industry sitting under the 'red flag of anarchy' and applauding the Internationale, why that was worth a lifetime of abuse!"²⁷

Less than six years after this gratifying celebration at the Waldorf, Gumberg suffered a heart attack and died on May 30, 1939. He remained to the end an anomaly for his time. Closely linked with Communists, Gumberg died a public relations officer for Atlas Corporation, trustee of the New York Neurological Institute, and on the Board of Directors of Franklin Simon, Inc., American Company, Inc., and American-Russian Chamber of Commerce. While contemporaries endured depression-wrought hardships, the Gumbers moved to a Fifth Avenue hotel suite, owned a country estate near Norwalk, Connecticut, and switched from a Buick to a prestigious LaSalle automobile. These outward signs of prosperity were due to another anomaly: the financial wizardry of Floyd Odum's Atlas Corporation, an investment house which thrived during economic disaster.²⁸

Gumberg enjoyed the fruits of American capitalism, yet he never lost interest in the Soviet experiment. He remained the liaison for the chamber with their Moscow office and also with Soviet officials in America. After November 16, 1933, Boris Skvirsky became chargé d'affaires of the USSR embassy in Washington. The two men had overcome their bitter 1923 feud. In 1936 the USSR appointed Skvirsky Soviet ambassador to Afghanistan. As soon as he heard about the appointment, Skvirsky wrote Gumberg: "You and I have had our personal differences, but I think I never let it out of my mind during the difficult pre-recognition period that you were doing many helpful things in your own way and were sincerely interested in aiding better relations between the two countries." Through Skvirsky a warm friendship formed between Gumberg and Soviet Ambassador Alexander Troyanovsky. When Gumberg went to Washington he lunched with the Soviet official, who in turn frequently visited the Gumbers in New York or on their farm.²⁹

Troyanovsky required Gumberg's soothing and friendly association, for after 1933 Soviet-American relations seemed not to improve at all. Trade continued its decline to 1935; Soviet debts and confiscations could not be settled; America and Russia did not col-

laborate to check Japan or other militaristic powers; and Soviet irascibility piqued America's Ambassador William C. Bullitt, who gladly resigned his post in favor of heading the United States diplomatic mission to France. Bullitt's ebullient replacement, Joseph E. Davies, achieved no more, although he did not become as disenchanting with the USSR as his predecessor. Davies may have had a more realistic level of expectation based on a series of conversations he had with Gumberg in December 1936, shortly before his departure. While Gumberg did not keep a memorandum of their talks, Davies praised Gumberg for his "inestimable help . . . in getting some understanding of the situation in Russia."³⁰

Besides damaging official relations, Soviet purges estranged many American liberals from Soviet Russia. Stalin cleansed the party of former opponents who allegedly took their orders from the exiled Trotsky and Soviet Russia's fascist enemy, Germany. Fortunately Gumberg's brothers lived, but he had to use all his contacts with Troyanovsky, Spencer Williams, and Louis Fischer just to keep track of them. Zorin wound up in exile in the Urals and Veniamin, after a year of incarceration following the *Pravda* article, became a clerk first in Leningrad and then in Moscow. However, many of Gumberg's dearest Russian friends, such as Alexander Yazikov, suddenly disappeared forever. Most distressingly, Stalin permitted between August 1936 and March 1938 a series of notorious public treason trials in Moscow. To this day Sovietologists puzzle over why the defendants fell over each other in their efforts to place their guilty pleas before the court. Except in Russia, the trials made a mockery of Soviet justice. Gumberg knew or worked with many of the famous defendants found guilty, including Radek, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Krestinsky, Rakovsky, and Piatakov. Worst of all, Leonid Serebriakov was found guilty in the second show trial of January 1937. Not since Dwight Morrow died in 1931, tragically ending a promising political career, had Gumberg experienced such a grievous personal loss.³¹

Davies witnessed, as one of his first diplomatic functions, the trial and uncritically accepted the defendant's confessions. He returned to the United States briefly in April 1937 and attended a dinner with Gumberg at the Washington home of Rachel and Robert La Follette, Jr. After cocktails had been served, the ambas-

sador spellbound his hosts with a recounting of the recent Moscow trial. Gumberg, however, suddenly became violently ill. He later explained to his hosts:

Joe Davies' story of the trial had a strange effect upon me. I was tensely interested in his very realistic and vivid description. When he told of the testimony of Serebriakov and described how he nonchalantly concurred in Piatakoff's damaging testimony, not even coming to the microphone; how he yawned after he concluded his few words of testimony which sealed his death warrant. [*sic*] Then he sat down and crossed his legs. Joe described his voice and manner as very indifferent. Somehow when that part of the story was told, the whole picture came before my eyes. Serebriakov was as indifferent to death as he was in his life since he lost out as Secretary of the party and was succeeded by Stalin. He was one of the best friends I have had and one of the finest people that I knew. I guess Joe's story brought back to me vividly a picture of my friend and it did something to me to make me sick. Suddenly I broke out in a cold sweat and felt as though I were going to faint.³²

Despite his family's problems and the execution or disappearance of so many of his Soviet friends, Gumberg retained his respect for the results of the Russian Revolution. Since he had not lived in the USSR and had not shared all the problems of Soviet life, he refused to condemn those steps Stalin took to protect and preserve the revolution. Gumberg's memory of czarist oppression and of the promise raised by the near-bloodless Bolshevik insurrection, blinded him to Stalin's despotic rule. After holding a consistent position on Soviet Russia for nearly twenty years, Gumberg found it easier to rationalize than to criticize. Several of his American liberal acquaintances from the *Nation* and the *New Republic* did not share Gumberg's constancy and formed a committee which sought to discredit the Moscow trials by seeking the testimony of Trotsky, who allegedly directed the conspiracy against Stalin and the party. Gumberg did not join the group. In fact he tried for four hours to convince the committee's chairman, John Dewey, that an attack on Stalin's purges weakened Russia's position as the leading opponent of fascist-militarist Germany, Italy, and Japan.³³

Perhaps unfortunately, Gumberg lived long enough to find

many of his former associates placing Stalin in the same class as Hitler or Mussolini. Columnist and radio broadcaster Dorothy Thompson in February 1939 speculated that the famous antagonists, Hitler and Stalin, might reach an accord. In one of his last letters to Robins, Gumberg dismissed Thompson's story as a smear campaign against Russia and Stalin: "If Hitler made a deal with Stalin he would lose his biggest talking point both at home and abroad. He started off to destroy Communism in Germany and to save the rest of the world from it. How would it look if he made a deal with those Communists? As for Stalin, it just does not fit the book at all, although Russians would not hesitate to sign another Brest-Litovsk."³⁴

Less than three months after Gumberg died the two dictators agreed to the so-called Nazi-Soviet Pact freeing Hitler to engage in war without fear of Soviet reprisal. Soviet Russia signed a second Brest-Litovsk treaty which gave her a breathing spell to recuperate from the self-inflicted wounds caused by the purges.

In many respects the *Pravda* affair and Russian recognition marked contemporaries' recognition of Gumberg's total dedication to the cause of reconciliation. Throughout a difficult sixteen-year period he had kept the spark of Russian-American relations alive in politics, business, and journalism. As a confidant, secretary, translator, adviser, correspondent, businessman, and impresario he was the focal point and bridge between the two countries. During his lifetime he saw his dedication rewarded when America and Russia exchanged notes in 1933. Gumberg also lived long enough, though, to see the limited value recognition seemed to bring. Only after he died and after Germany invaded Russia on June 22, 1941, could more Americans appreciate the fact that two extraordinary, large, and powerful countries could ill afford to be without official and unofficial lines of communication.

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NOTES



Introduction

1. Telegram from Francis to Lansing, March 18, 1917, 861.00/284, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Russia*, 1918 (Washington, D.C., 1931) 1: 5–6 (hereafter cited as *FRUS*); Lansing to Francis, March 20, 1917, 861.00/284, *ibid.*, p. 12. See also David R. Francis, *Russia from the American Embassy: April 1916–November 1918* (New York, 1921), pp. 88–95.

2. See Thomas A. Bailey, *America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations from Early Times to Our Day* (New York, 1950), p. 233, and William A. Williams, *American Russian Relations, 1781–1947* (New York, 1952), pp. 113–14.

3. *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 1st sess., April 2, 1917, 55: 102–4.

4. George F. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War* (New York, 1956), p. 19. For the total picture of Russian war indebtedness, see Mikhail V. Condoide, *Russian-American Trade: A Study of the Foreign Trade Monopoly* (Columbus, Ohio, 1946), p. 6.

5. Lansing to Francis, May 22, 1917, 763.72/5171a, *FRUS, The World War, 1917, Supplement 2*, 1: 71–73.

6. Eventually American rail experts assisted in maintaining the Siberian railroad. However, this occurred after the Provisional government had been overthrown. See Betty Miller Unterberger, *America's Siberian Expedition, 1918–1920: A Study of National Policy* (Durham, N.C., 1956).

7. *America's Message to the Russian People: Addresses by the Members of the Special Diplomatic Mission of the United States to Russia in the Year 1917* (Boston, 1918).

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 143–47; Ronald Radosh, "American Labor and the Root Commission to Russia," *Studies on the Left* 3 (1962): 34–47.

9. President Wilson's Executive Order, April 14, 1917, George Creel Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Creel MSS), vol. 1. Creel to Wilson, May 10, 1917, Creel MSS, vol. 1. On the creation of a propaganda program in Russia, see Creel, *Rebel at Large: Recollections of Fifty Crowded Years* (New York, 1947), pp. 175–85, and James R. Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words That Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information, 1917–1919* (Princeton, N.J., 1939), pp. 301–3. Edgar G. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days: A Personal Chronicle of the Bolshevik Revolution* (New Haven, Conn., 1931), p. 3. Sisson discusses the finances of the CPI. After his Russian adventures Creel appointed him general director of the Foreign Section; see *One Hundred Red Days*, p. 6, and Creel, *Rebel at Large*, p. 175.

10. Frederick Lewis Schuman, *American Policy toward Russia since 1917: A Study of Diplomatic History, International Law, and Public Opinion* (New York, 1928), pp. 45, 48.

11. "Minutes of the War Council," May 29, 1917, File 116.22, American Red Cross Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as ARC MSS), p. 11.

12. *Ibid.*, July 4, 1917, p. 39. Hurley to Hermann Hagedorn, May 3, 1932, Hermann Hagedorn Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Box 2 of the William Boyce Thompson Collection (hereafter cited as Hagedorn MSS, WBT).

13. "Minutes of the War Council," June 18, 1917, ARC MSS, pp. 29–30. Interview of E. Raymond Wilson by James K. Libbey, May 30, 1973. Biographical materials on Robins are from Raymond Kassab, "Raymond Robins: Russia, Recognition, and Outlawry" (M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 1972); William A. Williams, "Raymond Robins and Russian-American Relations, 1917–1938" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1950); and Anne Vincent Meiburger, *Efforts of Raymond Robins toward the Recognition of Soviet Russia and the Outlawry of War, 1917–1933* (Washington, D.C., 1958).

14. Hermann Hagedorn, *The Magnate: William Boyce Thompson and His Time, 1869–1930* (New York, 1935).

15. "Report of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia" submitted to Henry P. Davison (chairman of the War Council), October 22, 1917, Hagedorn MSS, WBT, Box 6, pp. 1, 2, 19.

16. The telegram from Thompson to J. P. Morgan was sent through Francis and the State Department with a copy for the Treasury Department. See Assistant Secretary of State William Phillips to J. P. Morgan & Company, August 13, 1917, File 948.21, ARC MSS.

17. Hagedorn, *The Magnate*, p. 207; William Hard, *Raymond Robins' Own Story* (New York, 1920), p. 33.

18. Quote from Russell to President Wilson, November 7, 1917, Creel MSS, Vol. 1; quote from Robins's diary, October 22, 1917, Raymond Robins Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as Robins MSS), Box 42. Hard, who wrote the authorized account of Robins's adventures in Russia, misquotes Robins; see Hard, *Robins' Own Story*, p. 46.

19. Creel to President Wilson, October 22, 1917, Creel MSS, Vol. 1; Wilson to Thompson, October 24, 1917, Hagedorn MSS, WBT, Box 6.

20. "Report of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia," October 22, 1917, Hagedorn MSS, WBT, Box 6, p. 19; Robins's diary, September 6–11, 1917, Robins MSS, Box 42; Williams, "Raymond Robins," p. 62.

21. Robins's diary, November 2, 1917, Robins MSS, Box 42; Hard, *Robins' Own Story*, pp. 48–52.

22. Letter of recommendation for Gumberg from Charles Edward Russell to John F. Stevens (chairman of Advisory Commission of Railway Experts), July 9, 1917, Alexander Gumberg Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as Gumberg MSS), Box 1. Bouden & Liebman (Counselors at Law) to Gumberg, October 1, 1917, Robins MSS, Box 14.

23. Meiburger, *Efforts of Raymond Robins*, pp. 9–10; Williams, "Raymond Robins," p. 64. Robins met Peter Kropotkin when the latter was on a speaking tour of the United States in 1905.

24. See Williams, "Raymond Robins," p. 84.

Chapter 1

1. Dates cited are those of the Western or Gregorian Calendar. Russia retained the Julian Calendar until February 14, 1918. The Julian Calendar, by the twentieth century, was thirteen days behind the Gregorian.

2. Except for Gumberg, all the Americans who made this famous truck ride through Petrograd have published their versions: Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (New York, 1919), pp. 132–33; Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (New York, 1918), pp. 83–84; Williams, *Through the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1921), pp. 105–8; Beatty, *The Red Heart of Russia* (New York, 1918), pp. 203–6.

3. *New York Times*, May 31, 1939, p. 23; John I. Gaines to Libbey, May 15, 1973.

4. Two individuals who knew Gumberg's family in Russia have published their observations: William H. Chamberlin, *The Confessions of an Individualist* (New York, 1940), pp. 57–58, and Louis Fischer, *Men and Politics: An Autobiography* (New York, 1941), pp. 211–12.

5. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, p. 66. Pharmacist license issued to Gumberg by the State of New Jersey, January 16, 1908, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.

6. Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed, Trotsky: 1879–1921* (New York, 1954), pp. 241–43.

7. Gumberg solicited contracts for these industrial tools from numerous manufacturers and received 20 percent of the gross commission. When the firm sent him to Russia they increased his commission by 5 percent. See A. W. Perelstros and Daniel E. Storms to Gumberg, July 1, 1916; two letters from Storms to Gumberg, both dated March 30, 1917; Storms to Gumberg, April 15, 1917, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.

8. Memorandum of Agreement between Edgar G. Sisson and Gumberg, January 21, 1918; Letter of Agreement between Robins and Gumberg, February 21, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 13. Gumberg invested \$4,000 in Texas railroads. See Memorandum of Agreement between Storms and Gumberg, October 14, 1916, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. S. F. Telleen (Chase National Bank) to Gumberg, January 9, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. Gumberg received his American citizenship on June 9, 1914, Certificate #481933, County of Kings, New York, Gaines to Libbey, May 15, 1973. There is some contradictory evidence regarding the precise date of his citizenship. See Gumberg to Captain R. Strath, July 1, 1925; Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett to Strath, July 2, 1925; Dwight Morrow to Sir Arthur Salter, May 9, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 4 and 6.

9. Albert Rhys Williams, *Journey into Revolution: Petrograd, 1917–1918* (Chicago, 1969), pp. 44–45, 62.

10. Henry K. Norton, *The Far Eastern Republic of Siberia* (New York, 1923), pp. 170–72. An excellent example of the influence of Russian-Americans on the Bolshevik view of the United States may be noted in the person of Boris Reinstein, a one-time resident of Buffalo, New York. Reinstein directed the Bolshevik Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda. See Edward A. Ross, *The Russian Soviet Republic* (New York, 1923), p. 96.

11. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, pp. 90–91.

12. Letters to Libbey from Avrahm Yarmolinsky, February 7, 1973; Lisa von Borowsky, March 28, 1973; John C. Dreier, March 31, 1973. Gumberg to Hicks, January 30, February 6, 1935; Hicks to Gumberg, January 31, October 14, 1935; Gumberg to Robins, July 31, 1935; Robins to Gumberg, August 15, 1935, Gumberg

MSS, Boxes 12 and 12A. See also Granville Hicks, *John Reed: The Making of a Revolutionary* (New York, 1937). Reed, *Ten Days*, pp. 238–39.

13. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, p. 80; Williams, *The Russian Land* (New York, 1927); John Maynard, *The Russian Peasant and Other Studies* (New York, 1962), pp. 90–92.

14. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, p. 22.

15. Hicks, *John Reed*, pp. 258–59; Richard O'Connor and Dale L. Walker, *The Lost Revolutionary: A Biography of John Reed* (New York, 1967), pp. 198–99; Robert A. Rosenstone, *Romantic Revolutionary: A Biography of John Reed* (New York, 1975), p. 287; and of related interest see Barbara Gelb, *So Short a Time: A Biography of John Reed and Louise Bryant* (New York, 1973).

16. There is a massive amount of published material on the events outlined within this text on the Russian revolutionary period. I would direct the reader to several excellent studies: N. N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (New York, 1962), 2 vols.; William H. Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution, 1917–1921* (New York, 1960), Vol. 1; Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1957), 3 vols.; Robert V. Daniels, *Red October: The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917* (New York, 1967).

17. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, pp. 107, 110; Beatty, *Red Heart of Russia*, p. 214.

18. Beatty, *Red Heart of Russia*, p. 205; Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, pp. 117–18.

19. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, pp. 72–73.

20. Decrees issued by the Second Congress are available in English. See Robert V. Daniels, ed., *A Documentary History of Communism* (New York, 1960), pp. 117–24; C. K. Cumming and W. W. Pettit, eds., *Russian-American Relations, March 1917–March 1920* (New York, 1920), pp. 41–44.

21. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, p. 122.

Chapter 2

1. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, p. 223.

2. Gumberg's passes from Dzerzhinsky, Military Revolutionary Committee, Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers, Commandant's Department, No. 1041, November 18, 1917; Molotov, Military Revolutionary Committee, Petrograd Soviet of Workers and Soldiers, No. 4479, November 23, 1917; Trotsky, Peoples' Commissar of Foreign Affairs, November 17, December 8, 1917, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, pp. 139–40.

3. *Information*, American Red Cross War Council, No. 21, February 9, 1918, ARC MSS, File 948. Raymond Robins, Thomas Thacher, Allen Wardwell, "Memorandum on the Red Cross Mission to Russia," February 6, 1918, ARC MSS, File 948.08, p. 3.

4. Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: The History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–67* (New York, 1968), p. 54; Deutscher, *Prophet Armed*, pp. 348–49.

5. Schuman, *American Policy toward Russia*, pp. 56, 58; Arthur S. Link, *Wilson the Diplomatist: A Look at His Major Foreign Policies* (Baltimore, Md., 1957), pp. 12–15; Robert James Maddox, "Woodrow Wilson, the Russian Embassy and Siberian Intervention," *Pacific Historical Review* 36 (November 1967): 437–39.

6. Deutscher, *Prophet Armed*, p. 348; Jacques Sadoul, *Notes sur la revolution Bolchevique* (Paris, 1920), p. 61.

7. Robins testified about his meeting with Trotsky, U.S., Congress, Senate, 65th Cong., 3d sess., *Bolshevik Propaganda, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 1919, pp. 783–84.

8. Robins and Thacher to Gumberg, January 26, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 13.

9. Hagedorn, *The Magnate*, pp. 243–44; Hard, *Robins' Own Story*, pp. 55–59. Robins as quoted by R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *British Agent* (New York, 1933), p. 222.

10. Hagedorn, *The Magnate*, p. 269. Robins urged Thompson to leave Russia and accept a new role as lobbyist, extract of letter from Robins to Hagedorn, January 31, 1931, Hagedorn MSS, WBT, Box 1.

11. Hagedorn, *The Magnate*, pp. 252–55.

12. Lockhart, *British Agent*, pp. 198–205.

13. John Bradley, *Allied Intervention in Russia* (London, 1968), pp. 13–14; Hagedorn, *The Magnate*, p. 260; extract of letter from Robins to Hagedorn, January 31, 1931, Hagedorn MSS, WBT, Box 1.

14. "Memorandum for the Ambassador" from Judson, November 19, 1917, Robert Lansing Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Lansing MSS), 31:5500, 5501. Francis to Judson, November 20, 1917, Lansing MSS, 32:5517, 5518. Lansing's desk diary, December 6, 1917, Lansing MSS, Reel 2, MF 775; telegram from Lansing to Francis, December 6, 1917, 861.00/796a, *FRUS, Russia*, 1918, 1: 289.

15. Henry P. Davison forwarded Robins's plea to President Wilson on January 5, 1918. Telegram from Robins to Davison, December 26, 1917, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Wilson MSS), Series 4, File 270A, Box 198, 107922. Lansing to Francis, February 14, 1918, 861.00/1064, *FRUS, Russia*, 1918, 1: 381.

16. Robins's diary, December 21, 1917, Robins MSS, Box 42; Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, pp. 199, 208; Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, pp. 167–68.

17. Robins's diary, December 24, 1917, Robins MSS, Box 42.

18. Quote on Gumberg's conversations with Lenin from Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, pp. 222–23.

19. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, pp. 336–37.

20. *The German-Bolshevik Conspiracy*, War Information Series, No. 20, Washington, D.C., October 1918; Peter G. Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment, 1917–1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 47–48.

21. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, pp. 75, 178; Bullard to Robins, November 22, 1917, Robins MSS, Box 13.

22. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, p. 110 (quotes, pp. 40, 203). Memorandum from Sisson to Gumberg, January 21, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 13. Sisson paid Gumberg \$5,000 for his services. Earlier Gumberg became an authorized representative of the Russian Press Division, CPI, January 10, 1918, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, p. 229. Sisson cabled Creel of his cooperation with the Soviet government. Creel told Wilson in a memorandum that Sisson "reports utmost harmony." See Creel to Wilson, January 15, 1918, Creel MSS, Vol. 1.

23. Link, *Wilson the Diplomatist*, pp. 101–2; Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, p. 208.

24. President Wilson quoted from "The Fourteen Points," Louis L. Snyder, ed., *Fifty Major Documents of the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J., 1955), p. 27.

25. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, p. 228; Lockhart, *British Agent*, p. 219.
26. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, p. 195.
27. William H. Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution* (New York, 1965), 1: 370.
28. Hicks, *John Reed*, p. 296.
29. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, p. 211.
30. Eastman, *Heroes I Have Known: Twelve Who Lived Great Lives* (New York, 1942), pp. 214–16.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

Chapter 3

1. John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *The Forgotten Peace: Brest-Litovsk, March 1918* (New York, 1939).
2. Deutscher, *Prophet Armed*, pp. 379–82.
3. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, p. 232.
4. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, pp. 322–23.
5. Robins's diary, February 15–19, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 42; telegram from Francis to Lansing, February 22, 1918, 861.00/1171, *FRUS, Russia*, 1918, 1: 386. Lockhart, *British Agent*, p. 220; telegram from Robins to Major Thomas Thacher, March 1, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 13.
6. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, p. 490; undated telegram from Robins and Arthur Ransome in Vologda to Lenin, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.
7. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, p. 71.
8. Sadoul, *Notes*, pp. 243–44; Lockhart, *British Agent*, p. 247; George F. Kennan, *The Decision to Intervene* (New York, 1958), p. 46.
9. Robins's diary, March 3–5, 1918; "Watch-Order on Red Cross Car No. 447," March 4, 1918, Robins MSS, Boxes 13 and 42.
10. The original English draft made by Gumberg is in the Gumberg MSS, Box 1. A copy of Gumberg's refined text is published in Hard, *Robins' Own Story*, p. 139.
11. Kennan, *Russia Leaves the War*, p. 498; Meiburger, *Efforts of Raymond Robins*, p. 40; telegram from Lockhart to British Foreign Office, Robins MSS, Box 13.
12. Cover letter of explanation signed by Robins and Gumberg, March 10, 1918; Francis to Lansing, March 9, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 13; Francis to Lansing, March 12, 1918, 861.00/1302½, *FRUS, Russia*, 1918, 1: 397–98.
13. Bonch-Bruевич, March 12, 1918, No. 270, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.
14. Robins's diary, March 15, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 42; Hard, *Robins' Own Story*, pp. 148–52.
15. Sadoul, *Notes*, pp. 253–54; Francis to Lansing, March 9, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 13. Pauline Tompkins, *American-Russian Relations in the Far East* (New York, 1949), p. 57; Meiburger, *Efforts of Raymond Robins*, p. 42.
16. Lockhart, *British Agent*, p. 247; telegram from Robins to Henry P. Davison, March 26, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 14.
17. V. I. Ulyanov (Lenin) and Acting People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs George Chicherin to Robins, March 29, 1918, No. 520, Robins MSS, Box 14. Robins to Chicherin, May 5, 1918, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.
18. Robins to Chicherin, April 10, 1918, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. Since this material is in the Gumberg MSS, it is possible that Kennan may not have seen the document—this would explain the minor errors in his *Decision to Intervene*, p. 175. Robins's testimony, U.S., Congress, Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, p. 889.

19. Robins to Chicherin, April 10, 1918, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. Writ issued to Gumberg from Felix Dzerzhinsky, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.

20. U.S., Congress, Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, p. 889; Kennan, *Decision to Intervene*, p. 184.

21. Kennan, *Decision to Intervene*, pp. 179–80.

22. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, pp. 425–26; Wardwell to Robins, April 20, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 14.

23. Trotsky to Robins, May 13, 1918; “Russian American Commercial Relations,” May 14, 1918; Robins to Trotsky and Lenin, April 25, 1918, Robins MSS, Boxes 13 and 14.

24. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, p. 287; U.S., Congress, Senate, *Bolshevik Propaganda*, p. 886.

25. Lenin to Press Department, April 27, 1918; letter of appointment to Gumberg from the Commissar of the Petrograd Telegraph Agency, n.d., No. 938, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. Charles Stephenson Smith quoted in letter of introduction for Gumberg to Melville Stone, May 14, 1918; Trotsky to Gumberg, May 13, 1918, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.

26. Unsigned letter to Arthur Ransome, May 30, 1918, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.

27. Williams, *Journey into Revolution*, p. 306.

28. Tompkins, *American-Russian Relations*, pp. 72–73, 65; Lansing, “Memorandum on German Domination in Siberia and the Possible Means of Overcoming It,” March 22, 1918, Lansing MSS, Reel 1, MF 147–51. Telegram from Robins to William Boyce Thompson, March 13, 1918, enclosed in letter from Thompson to John D. Ryan, member of the Red Cross War Council, March 29, 1918, ARC MSS, File 948.01; Captains W. B. Webster and W. L. Hicks to Robins, March 31, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 14; Maddox, “Woodrow Wilson,” p. 440. See also William A. Williams, “American Intervention in Russia, 1917–1920,” *Studies on the Left* 3–4 (Fall 1963–Winter 1964): 24–48, 39–57.

29. Gumberg and Williams quoted from *Journey into Revolution*, p. 306.

Chapter 4

1. Meiburger, *Efforts of Raymond Robins*, pp. 55–57.

2. Heywood Hardy and Thomas Thacher to Gumberg, (both dated) July 2, 1918, Gumberg MSS, Box 1; Robins to Gumberg, July 19, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 14; Robins to Gumberg, July 30, August 3, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

3. Harry Freeman (TASS correspondent) to Libbey, April 9, 29, 1974. Durant had been employed as a secretary to the Martens Mission and was a good friend of Gumberg. See Durant to Gumberg, April 3, 1920, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. When Durant received his appointment as director of ROSTA’s American Bureau, he asked Gumberg to assist him by accepting the status of “Special Correspondent.” See Durant to Gumberg, January 20, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. ROSTA was created in the summer of 1918 and continued to function for the RSFSR until 1935. TASS (Telegraph Agency of the USSR), established on July 10, 1925, absorbed ROSTA ten years later. Sergei Losev (deputy director general of TASS) to Libbey, (received October 10, 1974). Wardwell to Gumberg, May 2, 1919; Gumberg to Wardwell, April 30, 1919; Thacher to Gumberg, March 5, 1921; Walter D. Fletcher (Stetson, Jennings & Russell) to Gumberg, December 22, 1922; Stetson, Jennings & Russell to Gumberg, May 11, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 1, 2, and 3. For a sample

of the problems associated with American investment in Russia, see *Bourne v. Bourne*, Court of Appeals of New York, *Northeastern Reporter* (St. Paul, 1925), 148:180–85.

4. Leonid I. Strakhovsky, *American Opinion about Russia, 1917–1920* (Toronto, 1961), pp. 85–86; Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Bolshevik Revolution: Its Impact on American Radicals, Liberals, and Labor* (New York, 1967), p. 42; Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New York, 1963), pp. 175, 202; Antony C. Sutton, *Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development, 1917 to 1930* (Stanford, Calif., 1968), pp. 287–88.

5. Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study of National Hysteria, 1919–1920* (New York, 1964), p. 213; quote from Floyd B. Odium to Libbey, July 12, 1973.

6. Williams, "Raymond Robins," p. 153.

7. Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left* (New York, 1969), p. 48; Reed as quoted in Eastman, *Heroes I Have Known*, p. 219; quote from Eastman to Martens, April 1920, Gumberg MSS, Box 1; Murray, *Red Scare*, pp. 274–75. See also Foster Rhea Dulles, *The Road to Teheran: The Story of Russia and America, 1781–1943* (Princeton, N.J., 1944), p. 160.

8. Stearns to Gumberg, December 3, 1918, January 7, 20, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1; "Foreign Comment: Peace or War?" *Dial* 66 (January 25, 1919): 93; Louis D. Froelick (American Asiatic Association) to Gumberg, July 21, 1919, and March 5, 1920; Elsie F. Weil to Gumberg, May 8, 1922; Gumberg to Weil, June 4, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 1 and 2.

9. William Hard, "Anti-Bolsheviks: Mr. Lansing," *New Republic* 19 (July 2, 1919): 271–73; "Anti-Bolsheviks: Mr. Spargo," *ibid.* 19 (July 9, 1919): 306–10; "Anti-Bolsheviks: The Up-Rollers," *ibid.* 19 (July 16, 1919): 351–54; "Anti-Bolsheviks: Mr. Sack," *ibid.* 19 (July 23, 1919): 385–87; "Anti-Bolsheviks: The Twenty Millions," *ibid.* 19 (July 30, 1919): 411–14; "Anti-Bolsheviks: Mr. Bakhmetev," *ibid.* 20 (August 13, 1919): 45–48. See also Robins to Gumberg, May 28, August 14, 1919; Hard to Gumberg, May 27, June 11, 12, 24, July 7, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.

10. John Spargo, *Bolshevism: The Enemy of Political and Industrial Democracy* (New York, 1919).

11. "Correspondence," *New Republic* 20 (August 20, 1919): 89–92.

12. Hard to Gumberg, August 27, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1; Selig Adler, *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth Century Reaction* (New York, 1961), p. 52; Ruhl Bartlett, *The League to Enforce Peace* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1944), p. 111.

13. Adler, *Isolationist Impulse*, p. 61; Condoide, *Russian-American Trade*, p. 76.

14. Beatrice Farnsworth, *William C. Bullitt and the Soviet Union* (Bloomington, Ind., 1967), pp. 58–70; Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1962), pp. 202–4; Thomas A. Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal* (Chicago, 1963), pp. 124–27.

15. McDonald to Hard, August 22, 1919; Hard to Gumberg, September 13, 1919; Robins to Gumberg, September 16, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.

16. Gumberg to Hard, October 20, 1919; Hard to Gumberg, October 24, 1919; quote from McDonald to Gumberg, May 24, 1920, Gumberg MSS, Box 1; Cumming and Pettit, *Russian-American Relations*. See also Cumming to Gumberg, July 8, August 21, 1920, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.

17. Aaron, *Writers on the Left*, pp. 381–82.

18. Vivian Garets (secretary, The Church of the Ascension) to Libbey, March

30, 1973. Robins to Gumberg, April 11, May 28, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. Quote from William A. Williams to Libbey, February 7, 1973. On Frankie's attributes, see Margaret Dreier Robins to Frances Adams, January 26, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 6. I have reconstructed the meeting of Gumberg and Sinclair based on limited documents.

19. Upton Sinclair, *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair* (New York, 1962), pp. 9, 218.

20. Sinclair to the United States Federal Attorney, May 3, 1918, Edward M. House Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven. Haldeman-Julius to Sinclair, April 12, 1919, Upton Sinclair Papers, The Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana (hereafter cited as Sinclair MSS), January–June 1919 Folder. Sinclair, *Jimmie Higgins: A Story* (Pasadena, Calif., 1919), p. 279.

21. "How America Refused Lenin's Call for Aid," *Appeal to Reason*, No. 1234 (July 26, 1919): 1; Upton Sinclair, "What Americans Don't Know," *Appeal to Reason*, No. 1236 (August 9, 1919): 4; "Russia—Pro and Con," No. 1237 (August 16, 1919): 4; "War on Russia," No. 1241 (September 13, 1919): 4. Gumberg to Sinclair, August 16, 1919, Sinclair MSS, July–December 1919 Folder.

22. Sinclair to Gumberg, August 2, 5, 12, September 2, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1; Sinclair, *The Brass Check: A Study of American Journalism* (Pasadena, Calif., 1920), pp. 385–94.

23. G. G. Wyant (Yale University Press) to Gumberg, July 15, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1.

24. Wyant to Gumberg, September 4, October 22, 1919; H. G. Deane (Yale University Press) to Gumberg, September 20, 1919; C. P. Rollins (Yale University Press) to Gumberg, September 25, 29, 1919; Gumberg to Wyant, October 20, 29, 1919; George P. Day to Gumberg, October 24, November 6, 12, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. Yale University Press has destroyed its records concerning the Gumberg book; Edward Tripp (editor, Yale University Press) to Libbey, March 30, 1973.

25. Avrahm Yarmolinsky (New York Public Library) to Gumberg, July 21, 1919; Thacher to New York Public Library, December 2, 1919; E. H. Anderson (director, New York Public Library) to Thacher, December 3, 1919; Thacher to Anderson, December 4, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1. The Gumberg archives were opened and integrated with other Russian materials in May 1921; see Yarmolinsky to Gumberg, May 3, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Gumberg made another deposit of thirty-one books and pamphlets; see Anderson to Gumberg, January 27, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Between 1922 and 1931 Gumberg placed five additional collections in the hands of the New York Public Library. These items, collected by Gumberg from his activities in the 1920s, included 5,000 newspapers, 100 pamphlets, 35 periodicals, and a miscellaneous collection of books. Report of Slavonic Division (New York Public Library) to Libbey, February 1973.

26. Robins to Gumberg, December 8, 1919, Gumberg MSS, Box 1; Ross to Robins, December 27, 1919, Edward A. Ross Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as Ross MSS), Box 12.

27. Nathaniel M. Pratt (American Institute of Social Service) to Ross, April 5, June 6, 1917; Ross to Pratt, April 15, 1917, Ross MSS, Box 9. See also Edward A. Ross, *Russia in Upheaval* (New York, 1918). Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days*, p. 91. Robins to Ross, December 19, 1919; Thacher to Ross, February 5, June 29, 1920; Ross to Thacher, July 2, 1920; telegram from Thacher to Ross, March 26, 1921; "Confer-

ence at the Bankers Club," February 2, 1920, Ross MSS, Boxes 12 and 13. Ross, *Russian Bolshevik Revolution* (New York, 1921); and *Russian Soviet Republic* (New York, 1923).

28. Ross quoted from *Russian Bolshevik Revolution*, p. v, and *Russian Soviet Republic*, p. 395.

29. Chamberlin to Gumberg, July 1, 5, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Mary E. Chamberlin (William's mother) to Gumberg, October 10, 1923; Gumberg to Chamberlin, November 11, 1923; quote from Chamberlin to Gumberg, late winter 1923 (Gumberg complained to Chamberlin for not dating his letters); quote from Gumberg to Chamberlin, March 15, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

Chapter 5

1. Floyd B. Odlum to Libbey, July 12, 1973; Jessica Smith to Libbey, May 28, 1974; Fischer, *Men and Politics*, pp. 212–13.

2. Hagedorn, *The Magnate*, pp. 279–80; Williams, "Raymond Robins," p. 168; Schuman, *American Policy toward Russia*, p. 123; Johnson to Robins, December 13, 1918, Robins MSS, Box 14.

3. Robert James Maddox, *William E. Borah and American Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge, La., 1969), p. 46.

4. Schuman, *American Policy toward Russia*, p. 146; Tompkins, *American-Russian Relations*, p. 129; Leonid I. Strakhovsky, *Intervention at Archangel: The Story of Allied Intervention and Russian Counter-Revolution in North Russia, 1918–1920* (Princeton, N.J., 1944), pp. 162–63; Norton, *Far Eastern Republic*, pp. 132–36.

5. Spargo, "Bainbridge Colby," in *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, Samuel Flagg Bemis, ed. (New York, 1929), p. 205; quote from Colby to Baron Avezzano, August 10, 1920, 760c.61 300b, FRUS, 1920, 3: 463–68; Ronald Radosh, "John Spargo and Wilson's Russian Policy," *Journal of American History* 52 (December 1965): 548–65.

6. Williams, "Raymond Robins," pp. 175–76; Meiburger, *Efforts of Raymond Robins*, p. 66.

7. Hagedorn, *The Magnate*, p. 287.

8. Robins to Gumberg, February 21, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

9. Quote from Robins to Gumberg, March 8, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

10. *Ibid.*; Joan Hoff Wilson, "The Role of the Business Community in American Relations with Russia and Europe, 1920–1933" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1966), p. 111.

11. Robins to Gumberg, March 8, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. President Warren G. Harding quoted from "Extracts from President Harding's Inaugural Address," March 4, 1921, Charles E. Hughes Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Hughes MSS), Box 4B.

12. Dulles, *Road to Teheran*, pp. 169–70. See also *New York Times*, March 23, 1921, p. 1. Telegram from Hughes to Consul Albrecht, March 25, 1921, 661.115/275a, FRUS, 1921, 2: 768; Wilson, "The Role of the Business Community," p. 114.

13. *New York Times*, May 25, 1921, p. 9. France gave Gumberg a letter of introduction for use with the State Department, May 16, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

14. Quote from Robins to Gumberg, September 29, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

15. Ross to Jerome Davis, April 26, 1921, Ross MSS, Box 13; Robins to Gum-

berg, June 29, 1921; Gumberg to Robins, July 16, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. See also Chamberlin, *Confessions of an Individualist*, p. 58.

16. Lester M. Jones, *Quakers in Action: Recent Humanitarian and Reform Activities of the American Quakers* (New York, 1929), pp. 129–34; Mary Hoxie Jones, *Swords into Ploughshares: An Account of the American Friends Service Committee, 1917–1937* (New York, 1937), pp. 44–46.

17. Quote from Gumberg to Robins, July 27, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2; Benjamin M. Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia: 1921–1923* (Stanford, Calif., 1974), p. 7; quote from Gumberg to Robins, July 27, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2; George W. Hopkins, “The Politics of Food: United States and Soviet Hungary March–August, 1919,” *Mid-America* 55 (October 1973): 251.

18. Robins to Gumberg, September 7, 24, 1921; Robins to Lovett, September 24, 1921; Gumberg to Robins, July 27, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

19. Quote from Gumberg to Lovett, October 4, 1921; Wardwell to Robins, March 7, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

20. Wardwell to Robins, March 7, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

21. Robins to Gumberg, October 18, November 30, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2

22. On Hoover, Gorky, and France, see *New York Times*, July 24, p. 2, July 25, p. 1, July 31, p. 1, August 27, 1921, p. 2.

23. Hoover to Harding, February 9, 1922, Warren G. Harding Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus (hereafter cited as Harding MSS), Roll 182, MF 0242.

24. Executive Order, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 1241–42; Hoover to Harding, December 20, 1921, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 1238–39.

25. Gumberg to Robins, December 19, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Goodrich to Guy M. Walker, May 16, 1921, Guy M. Walker Papers, DePauw University, Greencastle, Ind., DC 494, Folder 2. *Indianapolis News*, September 13, 1921, p. 5; Meiburger, *Efforts of Raymond Robins*, p. 72; quote from Gumberg to Robins, December 19, 1921; telegram from Gumberg to Robins, December 20, 1921, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

26. Purchasing Commission Minutes, January 16, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 182, MF 0101; Goodrich quoted from memorandum, “Economic Situation in Russia,” June 28, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 1005, p. 28; *ibid.*, MF 1004, p. 27.

27. John R. Shillady (secretary, NAACP) to Goodrich, September 26, 1919; Goodrich to Shillady, September 29, 1919, James P. Goodrich Papers, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Box 146; *Indiana Biography* (Indianapolis, 1940), 20: 209–12; David Mannweiler, *Governors of Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1966), p. 31; “Minutes of the One Hundred Sixteenth Meeting of the Synod of Indiana” (Hanover, 1941), p. 70; E. E. Moore, *Hoosier Cyclopaedia* (Connersville, 1905), pp. 195–96; Paul D. Brown, ed., *Indianapolis Men of Affairs, 1923* (Indianapolis, 1923), p. 235.

28. Hoover to Harding, February 9, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 182, MF 0245; memorandum from Burns to the attorney general, February 17, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 182, MF 0249; Paxton Hibben to Hoover, January 29, 1922; Hoover to Hibben, February 3, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

29. Gumberg to Robins, December 19, 1921; telegram from Gumberg to Robins, December 20, 1921; Gumberg to Goodrich, December 26, 1921, March 30, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Except for his gubernatorial papers, the Goodrich Papers are held by his son, Pierre, and were inaccessible for my research.

30. Quote from Robins to Gumberg, April 9, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2; Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, p. 149.

31. Robins to Gumberg, April 9, 1922; quote from Gumberg to Robins, April 21, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

32. Letter of introduction for Gumberg from Goodrich to Hoover, May 18, 1922, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa (hereafter cited as Hoover MSS). Hoover's appointment calendar, May 20, 22, 1922, Hoover MSS.

33. Quote from Gumberg to Kenneth Durant, June 21, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Hoover quoted by Gumberg, *ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. Gumberg to Baker, June 2, 1922; Gumberg to Robins, July 5, 1922; quote from Gumberg to Durant, June 21, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

36. Robins to Gumberg, September 29, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

37. Telegram from Summers to Lansing, January 22, 1918, DeWitt C. Poole Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as Poole MSS). Memoranda from Poole to Hughes, November 4, 17, 1921, Hughes MSS, Box 4A; Poole quoted from memorandum to Henry P. Fletcher (undersecretary of state), January 5, 1922, forwarded to Harding, January 9, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 1116, p. 8. The conspiracy to destroy Poole's credibility with Harding involved Gumberg, Goodrich, Paxton Hibben, and Jacob Hartmann, editor of *Soviet Russia*. Hibben and Hartmann decided to enlist Gumberg's aid in securing negative information about Poole which would be given to Goodrich who in turn would discuss Poole with Harding. See Hartmann to Gumberg, January 26, 1922; Hibben to Gumberg, January 27, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

Chapter 6

1. Jessica Smith to Libbey, June 14, 1974; Ivan Krasnov to Libbey, March 30, 1973. Chamberlin, *Confessions of an Individualist*, p. 58. Gumberg rarely kept copies of letters to his family. He communicated orally through third-party visitors which explains why it is impossible to reconstruct with any consistency Gumberg's family life in Russia. See Beatty (in Moscow) to Gumberg, January 2, 1922; Chamberlin (in Berlin) to Gumberg, April 2, 1923; Gumberg to Philip Chadbourn, June 19, 1923; letter of introduction for Durant from Gumberg to Zorin, July 18, 1923; Chamberlin (in Moscow) to Gumberg, August 23, September 9, December 2, 1923; Gumberg to Durant (in Moscow), September 1, 1923; Durant (in Moscow) to Gumberg, September 14, October 3, 5, 1923; Gumberg to Congressman James A. Frear, October 25, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 2 and 3.

2. Chamberlin, *Confessions of an Individualist*, p. 58.

3. Norton, *Far Eastern Republic*, pp. 98, 125, 147, 182, 184.

4. "To the Washington Conference on Limitation of Armaments: Memorandum of the Special Delegation of the Far Eastern Republic," January 5, 1922, Hughes MSS, Box 171, p. 11. Alexander Yazikov to Charles Evans Hughes, December 28, 1921, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as NA), Records Group 43 (hereafter cited as RG), Box 77, File 300 Far Eastern Republic (hereafter cited as FER).

5. Quote from Smith to Libbey, June 14, 1974; Norton, *Far Eastern Republic*, p. 184.

6. Gumberg to Robins, November 12, 1923; S. Pauker (aide to Boris Skvirsky) to Gumberg, December 11, 1923; Charles C. Pearce to Gumberg, October 27, November 30, 1923; Gumberg to Robert La Follette, Jr., November 9, 1923; Allen Wardwell to Gumberg, December 4, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

7. See, for example, Gumberg to Skvirsky, March 14, April 10, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Floyd B. Odlum to Libbey, July 12, 1973. Robins to Gumberg, September 21, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

8. Sutton, *Western Technology*, p. 255.

9. Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference*, pp. 32, 40, 43. Shidehara to Hughes, August 22, 1921, 861.00/8939, *FRUS*, 1921, 2: 713–14; telegram from Hughes to Chargé in Japan (Bell), September 9, 1921, 123C12/129a, *FRUS*, 1921, 2: 745–46; telegram from Bell to Hughes, September 15, 1921, 861a.01/74, *FRUS*, 1921, 2: 715–16; telegram from Hughes to Ambassador Warren (in Japan), October 4, 1921, 861a.01/89, *FRUS*, 1921, 2: 748. Yazikov et al. to Hughes, December 8, 1921; J. Butler Wright to Yazikov, December 15, 1921; DeWitt C. Poole to Hughes, December 23, 1921, NA RG 43, Box 77, File 300 FER.

10. Hagedorn, *The Magnate*, p. 287. Robins to Gumberg, January 26, 1922; George H. Moses to John C. Eversman, February 8, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Yazikov to Hughes, December 20, 1921; Poole to Wright, December 23, 1921, NA RG 43, Box 77, File 300 FER. Freda Kirchwey (*Nation*) to Gumberg, December 29, 1921, January 5, 1922; Gumberg to Kirchwey, January 23, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

11. Confidential "Report of the Subcommittee on the Pacific and Far Eastern Questions," January 4, 1922, Hughes MSS, Box 4B; quote from *New York Times*, January 4, 1922, p. 2. See also *New York Times*, January 3, pp. 1–2, February 9, 1922, p. 2.

12. Memorandum of the Special Delegation of the Far Eastern Republic, January 5, 1922; Poole to Hughes, January 13, 1922, Hughes MSS, Boxes 171 and 4B. Poole to Wright, January 11, 13, 31, 1922; Wright to Yazikov, January 12, 1922; memorandum from the Special Trade Delegation to Hughes, January 28, 1922, NA RG 43, Box 77, File 300 FER. *New York Times*, January 25, 1922, pp. 1–2; Tompkins, *American-Russian Relations*, pp. 176–78.

13. Gumberg to James P. Goodrich, August 21, 1922; Gumberg to Robins, August 23, 1922; Gumberg to Senator William E. Borah, December 17, 1924, February 2, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 2 and 4. *New York Times*, February 9, 1922, p. 2. Letter of introduction for Gumberg from D. R. Crissinger (Office of the Comptroller of the Currency) to C. B. King (vice president of Marion Steam Shovel Co.), March 2, 1922; Gumberg to Thomas Thacher, March 14, 1922; letter of introduction for Lacks from Frelinghuysen to Skvirsky, August 9, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. *New York Times*, February 9, 1922, p. 2.

14. George W. Robinson, "Charles Evans Hughes' Foreign Policy," pp. 71–72; Tompkins, *American-Russian Relations*, pp. 185–87.

15. Quote from Gumberg to Goodrich, November 9, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

16. Telegram from Hughes to the Commissioner at Riga (Young), July 25, 1922, 860n.01/52a, *FRUS*, 1922, 2: 873–74.

17. Goodrich to Gumberg, November 6, 1922; quote from Gumberg to Goodrich, November 9, 1922; see also Crissinger to Skvirsky, October 27, 1922; Gumberg to Thacher, November 3, 1922; Goodrich to Gumberg, November 9, 1922; Gumberg

to Goodrich, November 10, 14, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Schuman, *American Policy toward Russia*, p. 229; Edward M. Bennett, *Recognition of Russia: An American Foreign Policy Dilemma* (Waltham, Mass., 1970), pp. 109–10.

18. Gumberg to Robins, June 15, 1922; letter of introduction for Gumberg from Robins to Hays, June 20, 1922; quote from Gumberg to Robins, July 8, 1922; see also Gumberg to Robins, June 25, 1922; Robins to Gumberg, June 30, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

19. Quote from Robins to Gumberg, June 20, 1922; memorandum from Charles Recht to Hays, July 10, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. *Handbook of the Soviet Union* (New York, 1936), p. 349. Unfortunately all the Gumberg records held by Thacher's law firm have been destroyed. Zenia Pelzer to Libbey, May 7, 22, 1973.

20. Gumberg to Durant, June 21, 1922; quote from Gumberg to Robins, June 13, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

21. Goodrich kept an account of his activities in Russia. He later gave the 46-page document to Harding. See entry, June 19, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 0946, p. 14.

22. Quote from Robins to Hoover, June 21, 1922; Hoover to Robins, June 28, 1922; Gumberg to Robins, July 16, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Goodrich quoted from "Economic Situation in Russia," June 28, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 1004; Hughes to Harding, July 22, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 0922–23.

23. Hughes to Harding, August 21, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 0932.

24. Quote from Gumberg to Robins, August 21, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Harding to William Phillips (undersecretary of state), August 30, September 15, 1922; Phillips to Harding, September 15, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 1042, 1048–52.

25. Wardwell to Robins, July 7, 1922; Gumberg to Robins, July 8, 1922; quote from Robins to Gumberg, July 10, 1922 (internal evidence suggests actual date was July 9); see also Robins to Gumberg, July 10, 1922; Gumberg to Robins, July 16, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

26. Gumberg to Robins, January 12, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

Chapter 7

1. Robins to Gumberg, September 22, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 2, 1922. See also Robins to Gumberg, October 2, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2.

2. Quote from Robins to President Harding, October 14, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 231, MF 0570; *ibid.*, MF 0576. See also Robins to Gumberg, October 15, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. The administration's position toward Russia was not monolithic. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes preferred that Germany sanitize Soviet-American trade while Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover thought direct trade by Americans might give enough contact with Russia to bolster anticommunism. See Hoover to Hughes, December 6, 1921, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 0907–8.

3. Robins to Gumberg, October 23, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2; Harding to Robins, October 17, 1922, Harding MSS, Roll 231, MF 0574.

4. See, for example, Maddox, *William E. Borah*, pp. 197–98; Gumberg to Goodrich, December 1, 1922; Durant to Gumberg, January 20, 23, 1923; Gumberg to Robins, April 12, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 2 and 3.

5. Gumberg to Robins, December 13, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Quote from Robins to Borah, December 9, 1922, William E. Borah Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Borah MSS), Box 234. Bakhmetev to Hughes, April 28, 1922; Hughes to Bakhmetev, April 29, 1922, 701.6111/590-1, *FRUS*, 1922, 2: 875–77. “Memorandum of Interview with the Russian Ambassador,” Department of State, Office of the Secretary, June 13, 1922, Hughes MSS, Box 176. Gumberg to Robins, December 13, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. The Bakhmetev material at the Oral History Research Office of Columbia University was opened briefly after the ambassador’s death but then closed again by his widow; Louis M. Starr to Libbey, April 3, 1973.

6. Christian A. Herter to Perrin C. Galpin, January 23, 1923, Hoover MSS. Gumberg to Chadbourn, December 5, 1922; Chadbourn to Gumberg, January 16, 1923; translation of article from the *Baku Workman*, March 1, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 2 and 3. Sutton, *Western Technology*, pp. 18–20.

7. Gumberg to Robins, January 12, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

8. C. E. Black and E. C. Helmreich, *Twentieth Century Europe: A History* (New York, 1963), pp. 162, 220–21; Meiburger, *Efforts of Raymond Robins*, p. 98.

9. Report from Helen Todd to Mrs. Walter Cope, May 25, 1922, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore (hereafter cited as WILPF MSS), DG 43, Box 3, pp. 1–3.

10. Robins to Gumberg, December 14, 1922, Gumberg MSS, Box 2. Gumberg, Robins, and Thomas Thacher made plans early in 1923 to form a National Committee for the Recognition of Soviet Russia. The Franco-German crisis dominated the news, and the project was aborted due to bad timing. See Robins to Gumberg, January 21, 1923; Gumberg to Robins, February 5, 1923; Gumberg to Thacher, February 25, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Press release, Women’s Committee for Recognition of Russia, March 21, 1923, Women’s Committee for Recognition of Russia Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore (hereafter cited as WCRR MSS), CDGA, p. 4.

11. Gumberg to Boris E. Skvirsky, March 11, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

12. Women’s Committee for Recognition of Russia, press release, March 21, 1923, WCRR MSS, CDGA, pp. 2–3. See also form letter from Branham, March 31, 1923; press release, April 3, 1923, WCRR MSS, CDGA.

13. Hughes, press release, March 21, 1923, *FRUS*, 1923, 2: 758. See also Hughes to Harding, March 22, 1923, Harding MSS, Roll 181, MF 1086.

14. Quotes from Goodrich to Gumberg, March 7, 16, 1923; see also Gumberg to Goodrich, March 1, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

15. Gumberg to La Follette, June 18, 1923; Christina Merriman (secretary, Foreign Policy Association) to Gumberg, July 16, 1923; Gumberg to Wheeler, July 23, 1923; Gumberg to Borah, July 23, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. See also Gompers to Hughes, July 9, 1923; Hughes to Gompers, July 19, 1923, *FRUS*, 1923, 2: 758–64.

16. Schuman, *American Policy toward Russia*, p. 232.

17. Floyd Odium to Libbey, July 12, 1973.

18. Quote from Gumberg to Robins, April 1, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3; Robert D. Warth, *Lenin* (New York, 1973).

19. Maddox, *William E. Borah*, p. 199; Gumberg to Borah, April 20, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. See also “Bolshevism’s ‘Public Challenge to God,’” *Literary Digest* 77 (April 14, 1923): 9.

20. Gumberg to Goodrich, April 20, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

21. Davis to Libbey, June 21, 1973. The papers of Jerome Davis are held by the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York (hereafter cited as Davis MSS). Davis to Gumberg, April 18, 1923; quote from Gumberg to Davis, April 24, 1923; see also Davis to Gumberg, April 30, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

22. Gumberg to Robins, March 6, 1923; Beedy to Gumberg, March 9, 1923; Gumberg to Wheeler, March 16, June 7, 18, July 15, 1923; Gumberg to Goodrich, March 22, 1923; Allen Wardwell to Gumberg, May 3, 1923; Wheeler to Gumberg, June 23, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Burton K. Wheeler (with Paul F. Healy), *Yankee from the West* (Garden City, N.Y., 1962), pp. 202–3.

23. Quote from Goodrich to Gumberg, February 24, 1923; see also Robins to Gumberg, February 17, 1923; Gumberg to Skvirsky, March 13, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

24. Frear to Gumberg, April 4, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Bradford Merrill to Frear, April 25, May 26, 29, 1923, James A. Frear Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as Frear MSS), Box 1. Gumberg to Frear (in Moscow), August 31, 1923; itinerary of the Unofficial Commission for August 4–8, 1923, Frear MSS, Box 1. See also Gumberg to Skvirsky, June 29, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. *New York Times*, October 16, 1923, p. 7.

25. Quote from Gumberg to Borah, July 5, 1923; Borah to Gumberg, July 10, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

26. Telegram from Robins to Goodrich, April 24, 1923; Gumberg to Goodrich, May 10, 16, 23, 30, 1923; Gumberg to Robins, May 14, June 22, 1923; Gumberg to Borah, June 18, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Goodrich to Robins, June 4, 1923; Gumberg to Robins, June 15, 1923, Robins MSS, Box 19. Quote from Robins to Harding, May 31, 1923; Goodrich to Gumberg, June 18, 1923; Gumberg to Boris Freeman (in Moscow), June 19, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

27. Williams, "Raymond Robins," p. 195. Goodrich to Gumberg, June 18, July 26, 1923; Robins to Gumberg, June 25, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

28. Robins (in Berlin) to Gumberg, August 5, 6, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3; Coolidge to Hughes, July 26, 1923, Hughes MSS, Box 16.

29. Gumberg to Goodrich, September 7, 1923; Gumberg to Durant, August 14, 1923; Gumberg to Goodrich and Borah, August 7, 1923; Gumberg to Robins, August 14, 1923; Gumberg to Skvirsky, August 13, 16, 22, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

30. Gumberg to Borah, August 22, September 7, 1923; Gumberg to Wheeler, August 23, 1923; Robins to Gumberg, September 21, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Goodrich to Coolidge, October 4, 1923, Calvin Coolidge Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Coolidge MSS), Reel 85; Coolidge to Goodrich, October 8, 1923, Coolidge MSS, Reel 85. Gumberg to Robins, October 19, 1923; Frear to Gumberg, October 24, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

31. Quote from Gumberg to Robins, November 7, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Coolidge to Robins, November 13, 1923, Salmon O. Levinson Papers, University of Chicago (hereafter cited as Levinson MSS). Robins to Levinson, November 20, 1923, Levinson MSS. Gumberg to Goodrich, November 16, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

32. Quote from Robins to Gumberg, December 1, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

33. Williams, "Raymond Robins," p. 197. Telegram from Chicherin to Coolidge, December 16, 1923, No. 613, 711.61/71, FRUS, 1923, 2: 787.

34. Telegram from Hughes to the Consul at Reval for retransmittal to Chicherin, December 18, 1923, 711.61/71, *FRUS*, 1923, 2: 788.

35. Gumberg to Robins, December 19, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Hughes to Coolidge, December 26, 1923, Hughes MSS, Box 4B. Bascom Slemp to Davis, January 19, 1924, Coolidge MSS, Reel 185. Charles C. Hyde, "Charles Evans Hughes," in Bemis, ed., *American Secretaries of State*, pp. 282–86.

36. Goodrich to Gumberg, December 28, 1923; Gumberg to Goodrich, December 19, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Borah to Robins, December 20, 1923; Robins to Borah, December 24, 1923, Borah MSS, Box 245. Robins to Gumberg, December 28, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. *New York Times*, December 30, 1923, sec. 8, p. 1. Robins to Borah, February 16, 1924, Robins MSS, Box 19.

37. Robinson, "Charles Evans Hughes' Foreign Policy," pp. 22–25.

Chapter 8

1. Chamberlin, *Confessions of an Individualist*, p. 56.

2. Gumberg to Kenneth Durant, September 6, 1923; quote from Gumberg to Durant, August 14, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

3. Deutscher, *Prophet Unarmed*, pp. 111–14. Gumberg to Durant, August 29, September 6, 7, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Durant to Jerome Davis, January 8, 1926, Davis MSS, Box 6.

4. Gumberg to Skvirsky, August 23, 1923; S. Pauker to Gumberg, September 1, 1923; quote from Gumberg to Durant, September 6, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

5. Gumberg to Durant, September 7, October 3, 1923; Gumberg to Robins, October 3, 1923; Gumberg to Skvirsky, November 7, 1923; Pauker to Gumberg, November 30, December 11, 12, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

6. Cablegram from Charles Recht to Nogin, July 5, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Robins to Borah, December 1, 1923, Borah MSS, Box 245.

7. Goodrich to Hughes, June 26, 1923; Goodrich to Gumberg, July 2, 1923; Gumberg to Goodrich, July 5, 1923; Recht to Nogin, July 5, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

8. Gumberg to Goodrich, November 12, 26, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

9. Nogin to Goodrich, November 22, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

10. Sutton, *Western Technology*, pp. 228–29, 226.

11. Gumberg to Goodrich, December 25, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

12. *Handbook of the Soviet Union* (New York, 1936), pp. 349, 352; Glen A. Smith, *Soviet Foreign Trade: Organization, Operations, and Policy, 1918–1971* (New York, 1973), pp. 58–59; Saul G. Bron, *Soviet Economic Development and American Business: Results of the First Year under the Five-Year Plan and Further Perspectives* (New York, 1930), p. 132; Gumberg to Borah, November 22, 1924, Gumberg MSS, Box 4; Hans Heymann, *We Can Do Business with Russia* (Chicago, 1945), p. 76.

13. Herbert Feis, *The Diplomacy of the Dollar: 1919–1932* (New York, 1966), pp. 47–48; James K. Libbey, "New Study Areas for Soviet-American Relations: The Case of Russian Gold," *SHAFR Newsletter* 6 (June 1975): 16–18.

14. Condoide, *Russian-American Trade*, p. 95. Gumberg to Borah, November 26, 1923; Gumberg to Senator Burton K. Wheeler, November 27, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

15. *Who's Who in America, 1930–1931* (Chicago, 1956). John B. Davies, Jr., to

Libbey, April 9, 1973. Unfortunately, the records of the considerable business Schley conducted with Russia for Chase National are not available.

16. Heymann, *We Can Do Business*, pp. 76–77, 137. Heymann acquired his information about Gumberg and ARTS by an interview with Schley conducted some twenty years after the syndicate was incorporated. Unintentionally Schley gave Heymann the impression that ARTS deposited \$2 million with Chase immediately as an act of good faith. Actually the sum was \$1 million. See Gumberg to Goodrich, December 25, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. The capital was increased to \$2 million in October 1925. See "The All-Union Textile Syndicate" (Moscow, 1925), p. 19. *Handbook of the Soviet Union*, pp. 369–75.

17. Gumberg to Goodrich, December 25, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3. Hoover's appointment calendar, January 15, 1924; Gumberg to Christian Herter, January 18, 1924, Hoover MSS.

18. Gumberg to Goodrich, January 10, February 20, 1924; telegram from Gumberg to Goodrich, January 11, 1924; Nogin to Senator Kenneth McKellar, January 17, 1924, Gumberg MSS, Box 4.

19. Condoide, *Russian-American Trade*, p. 23; John B. Quigley, *The Soviet Foreign Trade Monopoly: Institutions and Laws* (Columbus, Ohio, 1974), p. 18.

20. Condoide, *Russian-American Trade*, p. 40; *Economic Handbook of the Soviet Union* (New York, 1931), p. 105.

21. *Economic Handbook*, p. 104.

22. "The All-Union Textile Syndicate," pp. 10–11, 4–5, 14; "Activities of All-Russian Textile Syndicate," *Pearsall's Market Bulletins*, No. 14 (May 12, 1926).

23. "Russia's Cotton Come-Back," *Commerce and Finance*, No. 40 (October 7, 1925): 1977; "Balance Sheet and Statement of Expenditures, December 13, 1923, to September 30, 1924," All-Russian Textile Syndicate, Inc., Gumberg MSS, Box 4. "The All-Union Textile Syndicate," p. 12.

24. "Balance Sheet as of September 30th 1926 and Statement of Export Operations," All-Russian Textile Syndicate, Inc., Gumberg MSS, Box 5. George C. Herring, Jr., *Aid to Russia, 1941–1945: Strategy, Diplomacy, the Origins of the Cold War* (New York, 1973), p. 37.

25. Gumberg to John C. Eversman, March 6, 1924; contract (December 1924) between ARTS and James McDowell, Gumberg MSS, Box 4. Cotton experts commanded \$1,250 per month which is indicative of the care the syndicate took to assure the acquisition of top quality cotton.

26. Lamar Fleming to Anderson, Clayton & Company, April 23, 1924, Gumberg MSS, Box 4. These statistics are based on the standard American bale of cotton.

27. W. L. Clayton to Gumberg, April 21, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Box 4. ARTS was also extremely careful in placing trial orders for textile machinery. See Gumberg to R. M. Mauldin, February 20, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Box 4.

28. *New York Times*, October 4, 1924, p. 19. Gumberg to Borah, November 22, 1924; Gumberg to Goodrich, October 27, 1926; "Balance Sheet as of September 30th 1926," Gumberg MSS, Boxes 4 and 5. There were a number of changes in the personnel and structure of the syndicate which I do not chronicle in detail. Gumberg to Goodrich, July 2, 1924; "Balance Sheet and Statement of Expenditure," Gumberg MSS, Box 4.

29. Gumberg to Goodrich, January 10, 11, 1924, April 6, 1925, January 7, 1926; Gumberg to Borah, November 22, 1924; telegram from Clayton to Gumberg, April

11, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 4 and 5. "Memorandum: Re: All-Russian Textile Syndicate, Inc.," The Equitable Trust Company of New York, April 9, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Box 4. *New York Times*, October 6, 1925, p. 35. Heymann, *We Can Do Business*, p. 139. Quote from Gumberg to Goodrich, January 6, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Box 4.

30. *New York Times*, October 4, 1924, p. 19. "Russia's Cotton Come-Back," 1977. "Activities of All-Russian Textile Syndicate," *New York Evening Post*, October 13, 1926. *New York Times*, October 6, 1925, p. 35. Telegram from Clayton to Gumberg, April 11, 1925; Clayton to Gumberg, April 20, 1925; B. Liebenstein (*Journal of Commerce*) to Gumberg, December 30, 1925; Gumberg to Allen Wardwell, January 8, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 4 and 5. Gumberg to *New York Times*, October 15, 1925; "Balance Sheet as of September 30th, 1925," Gumberg MSS, Box 4. *New York Times*, June 29, 1924, sec. 7, p. 13. Clayton to Gumberg, July 5, 15, 1924; M. A. Nisbet to Gumberg, September 26, 1924; N. B. Dial to Gumberg, September 29, 1924; James A. Frear to Gumberg, January 20, 1925; Gumberg to Frear, February 6, 10, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Box 4.

31. Inter-office memorandum from Liston M. Oak to Gumberg, May 18, 1925; Gumberg to Goodrich, June 2, 1925; Jerome Davis to Gumberg, June 6, July 3, 1925; Gumberg to Davis, June 22, 1925, January 5, 1926; Oak to Gumberg, August 10, 1925; Gumberg to Borah, November 18, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 4 and 5. *New York Times*, October 6, 1925, p. 35. Sutton, *Western Technology*, pp. 140, 247.

32. Christina Merriman (secretary, Foreign Policy Association) to Gumberg, January 26, 1926; Gumberg to Goodrich, February 1, 8, 1926; Goodrich to Gumberg, February 5, 1926; Robins to Gumberg, February 25, March 7, 31, May 4, 6, 1926; Gumberg to Robins, March 1, 27, 30, April 16, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5.

33. Gumberg to Gilbert, January 8, March 11, 1926; "Minutes of the Executive Board for the Committee for Recommending American Books to the U.S.S.R.," April 9, 1926; Kirchwey to Gumberg, April 14, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5.

34. Guest list, "Luncheon at Bankers' Club February 19, 1926 / Arranged by Mr. Gumberg for Mr. Walter Duranty"; Duranty to Gumberg, April 17, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5.

35. Quote from Gumberg, notes delivered on February 19, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5.

Chapter 9

1. Joan Hoff Wilson, *Ideology and Economics: U.S. Relations with the Soviet Union, 1918–1933* (Columbia, Mo., 1974), pp. 38–48, 83.

2. Quote from Kellogg to the chairman of the Republican National Committee, February 23, 1928, 111/309, *FRUS*, 1928, 3: 824.

3. Confidential memorandum from Gumberg to Floyd Odlum, March 17, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6. *New York Times*, June 12, 1926, p. 21; see also June 24, 1926, p. 44; June 25, 1926, p. 5.

4. Gumberg to Senator William E. Borah, June 20, 1925; Gumberg to Captain R. Strath (British Military Control), July 1, 1925; Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett to Strath, July 2, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Box 4. Francis R. Welsh to Robert F. Kelley (chief, Division of Eastern European Affairs), August 17, 1927; J. C. White (acting chief) to Welsh, August 23, 1927, NA RG 59, Box 7331, 811.00B/738.

5. Gumberg to Chamberlin, June 10, 1925; Gumberg to Borah, June 30, Sep-

tember 16, November 23, 1925; telegram from Gumberg to Schley, July 10, 1925; Chamberlin to Gumberg, July 20, 23, 1925; cablegram from Gumberg to Isaiah J. Hoorgin (chairman, Amtorg), July 21, 1925; Liston M. Oaks to Goodrich, August 6, 1925; letter of introduction for Gumberg from the Commercial and Industrial Bank of the USSR, August 21, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Box 4.

6. Gumberg to Borah, September 16, 24, 1925; Borah to Gumberg, September 25, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Box 4. Telegram from Gumberg to Harold Stokes (Department of Commerce), September 17, 1925; Hoover's appointment calendar, September 19, 1925, Hoover MSS; quote from Goodrich, memorandum to President Coolidge, November 24, 1925, Coolidge MSS, Reel 85, p. 5. See also Hoover to Everett Sanders (Coolidge's secretary), October 12, 1925; Sanders to Hoover, October 13, 1925, Coolidge MSS, Reel 85.

7. Gumberg to Borah, September 24, 1925, Gumberg MSS, Box 4.

8. Gumberg to Goodrich, March 17, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5.

9. Statistics adapted from Condoide, *Russian-American Trade*, pp. 30, 70, 91.

10. Even in a famous case when the Soviets forced W. A. Harriman & Co. to surrender a manganese concession (1928–1929), Harriman received compensation in the form of bonds at 6 percent interest. See Sutton, *Western Technology*, p. 298.

11. Wilson, "Role of the Business Community," p. 321. Gumberg to Goodrich, November 9, 1923, Gumberg MSS, Box 3.

12. Wilson, "Role of the Business Community," p. 322.

13. Wilson, *Ideology and Economics*, pp. 52–57.

14. Hammer, *The Quest for the Romanoff Treasure* (New York, 1932).

15. *Economic Handbook of the Soviet Union* (New York, 1931), p. 139. Sutton, *Western Technology*, pp. 86, 174, 186, 188. *New York Times*, June 12, 1926, p. 21; see also *ibid.*, June 24, 1926, p. 44; June 25, 1926, p. 5; November 7, 1927, p. 37. Gumberg to Leonid B. Krassin, June 19, 1926; John P. Gregg (International Chamber of Commerce) to Gumberg, January 27, 1928, February 11, 12, April 12, 1929; Gumberg to Gregg, March 8, 24, 1928, February 14, 1929, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 6A and 7.

16. Schley quoted from a small printed folder of his remarks at the Bankers Club, July 23, 1926, American-Russian Chamber of Commerce Papers (separate component of Gumberg MSS), State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as ARCC MSS), Box 21, p. 1.

17. *Economic Handbook*, pp. 139–40. Gumberg to Colonel Wade H. Hayes, March 13, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A.

18. Gumberg to Smith, March 10, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5. Sutton, *Western Technology*, p. 102.

19. Gumberg to Dr. Jerome Davis, March 3, 1927; Gumberg to Smith, March 10, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 5 and 6. Schley's remarks to the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, July 23, 1926; "Budget for 1930," ARCC MSS, Box 21.

20. "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce—Recess Club, Monday, October 7, 1929—12:45 P.M.," ARCC MSS, Box 21, pp. 2–3. See also "Memorandum Regarding Action Taken by the Executive Committee since the Last Board Meeting of American-Russian Chamber of Commerce," December 5, 1929, ARCC MSS, Box 21.

21. Gumberg to Smith, September 12, 1927; Gumberg to Frank Callahan (Chase National Bank), January 12, 1928; memorandum from J. W. Bowen (Calla-

han's secretary), January 17, 1928; Gumberg to J. F. Hovey, February 4, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 6 and 6A. See also Smith's printed remarks delivered before a luncheon of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, Bankers Club, February 17, 1928, ARCC MSS, Box 21. Quote from Gumberg to Louis Domeratzky (Department of Commerce), October 17, 1929; Gumberg to Smith, December 5, 12, 26, 1928; Alexander Yazikov to Gumberg, March 31, 1929; Gumberg to Yazikov, April 16, 1929, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 6A and 7.

22. "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce—Recess Club, Thursday, December 5, 1929—12:45 P.M."; Gumberg to Tatiana Sofiano, November 11, 1929; "Memorandum Regarding Changes in Personnel and Activities of the Chamber," October 15, 1929; Schley to L. M. Kinchuk (president, USSR Chamber of Commerce for the West), November 11, 1929, ARCC MSS, Box 21.

23. Quote from Gumberg to Yazikov, November 22, 1929, ARCC MSS, Box 21. "Minutes of the Meeting . . . , December 5, 1929," p. 2.

24. "Minutes of the Meeting . . . , December 5, 1929," p. 3; Gumberg to Yazikov, January 9, 1930; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce at the Bankers Club, Wednesday, January 22, 1930—12:45 P.M."; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce at the Recess Club, Friday, March 14, 1930—12:45 P.M."; Schley to Oswald L. Johnston, April 7, 1930; Gumberg to Sofiano, April 10, 1930, ARCC MSS, Box 21. Williams received his official appointment at a meeting of the Board of Directors on May 9, 1930, Gumberg to Johnston, May 15, 1930, ARCC MSS, Box 22. For a published account of Williams's activities in the late 1930s, see Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow* (New York, 1941). See also "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce—October 27, 1930—Bankers Club—12:45 P.M."; Gumberg to Schley, June 25, 1935, ARCC MSS, Boxes 22 and 23.

25. Gumberg to Davis, April 29, 1926; Eddy to Gumberg, May 13, 1926; Gumberg to Kenneth Durant, September 20, 1926; Raymond Robins to Gumberg, October 10, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5.

26. Quote from Sinclair to Gumberg, July 16, 1926; Sinclair to Alexandra Kollentai, July 16, 1926; G. I. Broido (State Publishing House) to Sinclair, October 10, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5. Sinclair, *Oil* (Pasadena, Calif., 1927).

27. Sinclair to Gumberg, February 3, 1933; Gumberg to Sinclair, February 11, 24, June 12, 1933; Peter A. Bogdanov (chairman, Amtorg) to Sinclair, February 15, 1933; Gumberg to Mrs. Craig Sinclair, March 1, 1933; John Farrar (Farrar & Rinehart, Publishers) to Gumberg, October 30, 1933, Gumberg MSS, Box 10B. See also Sinclair, *Autobiography*, pp. 262–67; Harry M. Geduld and Ronald Gottesman, eds., *Sergei Eisenstein and Upton Sinclair: The Making and Unmaking of "Que Viva Mexico!"* (Bloomington, Ind., 1970).

28. Gumberg to Goodrich, July 17, October 8, 1926; Gumberg to Thacher, October 5, 1926; Clinton Gilbert to Gumberg, October 27, 1926; Gumberg to Gilbert, November 4, 12, 1926; Gumberg to Mrs. Thomas Thacher, November 5, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 5 and 6A.

29. "Memorandum re Mr. Piatakoff," February 7, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6. See also telegram from the secretary of state to the consul general at Paris, May 19, 1925, 811.111, *FRUS*, 1925, 2: 703.

30. Wilson, *Ideology and Economics*, p. 52. "Memorandum re Mr. Piatakoff"; Gumberg to Morrow, February 3, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6. Harold Nicolson, *Dwight Morrow* (New York, 1935).

31. Gumberg to Morrow, February 3, 1927; quote from Morrow to Olds, December 4, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 5 and 6.

32. Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett to Coert du Bois, December 11, 1926; cablegram from Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett to Coffin (American consul in Berlin), December 11, 1926; Gumberg to Morrow, February 3, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 5 and 6.

33. Gumberg to Morrow, January 25, February 3, 5, March 2, 1927; Gumberg to John Marshall (assistant attorney general), February 4, 1927; Marshall to Gumberg, February 5, 1927; Gumberg to Walter Duranty, March 18, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6. *New York Times*, March 15, 1927, p. 4. See also Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (New York, 1966), pp. 316, 372.

34. Motion passed by the Board of Directors of the All-Russian Textile Syndicate, December 15, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5. *New York Times*, December 14, 1926, p. 38. Quote from Newburger to Gumberg, November 26, 1926; quote from Clayton to Gumberg, December 14, 1926; W. S. Dowdell to Gumberg, December 13, 1926; undated letter of appreciation signed by all Gumberg's employees on the occasion of his retirement, Gumberg MSS, Box 5.

35. Clayton to Gumberg, August 31, October 29, 1927; telegram from George Tomashevsky to Gumberg, January 18, 1927; telegram from Gumberg to Tomashevsky, January 19, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6.

36. Quote from Gumberg to Schley, November 21, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5. Brochure entitled "Atlas Corporation," July 1932, Atlas Corporation Papers (separate component of Gumberg MSS), State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as AC MSS), Box 19. Odium to Libbey, July 12, 1923. Form letter announcing Gumberg's new position issued by the All-Russian Textile Syndicate, Inc., December 13, 1926; "Resolutions for Meeting of the Board of Directors of the United States Company," undated; Gumberg to William S. Wasserman (Dillon, Read & Co.), December 13, 1926; Gumberg to Mrs. Raymond Robins, December 13, 1926, Gumberg MSS, Box 5. See also Morrow to Robins, December 20, 1926, Robins MSS, Box 21.

37. Quote from Gumberg to Robins, April 2, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6.

38. Gumberg to Goodrich, April 16, 1927; Gumberg's diary, 1927; Gumberg to Clayton, April 7, August 15, September 27, 1927; Thacher to Gumberg, April 22, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6.

39. Sutton, *Western Technology*, pp. 202–3. Letter of introduction for Gumberg from Mark Van Doren to Mme Olga Kamenev, April 14, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6.

40. Quote from Dell to Gumberg, January 21, 1927; date of meeting found in Dell to Van Doren, February 5, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6. *Weekly News Bulletin* (Russian Information Bureau), July 23, 1926, p. 11.

41. Van Doren to Kamenev, April 14, 1927; Dell to Gumberg, November 3, 1927; Taylor to Gumberg, November 23, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 6 and 6A.

42. Gumberg to Thacher, May 17, 1927; letter of introduction for Gumberg from Borah, April 21, 1927; letter of introduction for Gumberg from Morrow to Henry M. Robinson, May 9, 1927; letter of introduction for Gumberg from Morrow to Sir Arthur Salter, May 9, 1927; Christian Rakovsky to Valerion Ossinsky, May 10,

1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6. See also Robins to Borah, April 16, 1927, Borah MSS, Box 271.

43. Report from American Consul (Geneva) S. Pinkney Tuck to the secretary of state, May 17, 1927, NA RG 59, 861.00B/471, pp. 1–12.

44. Radiogram from Schley to Gumberg, June 26, 1927; S. Danishevsky (president, USSR Bank for Foreign Trade) to Schley, June 11, 1927; Gumberg to Schley, July 20, August 26, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6.

45. Gumberg to Schley, February 6, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A. Floyd B. Odlum to Libbey, July 12, 1973.

46. Gumberg to Goodrich, October 10, 1927; Thacher to Gumberg, October 12, 1927; Leonid Serebriakov to Thacher, October 27, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6.

47. Gumberg to Clayton, October 13, 1927; memorandum from Gumberg to Schley, December 20, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6.

48. J. F. Hovey (Saco-Lowell Shops) to Gumberg, August 8, December 19, 1927; Gumberg to Hovey, September 12, 29, November 25, 1927; memoranda from Gumberg to Schley, November 2, December 20, 1927; Gumberg to I. Y. Yonov (vice president, ARTS), December 21, 1927; cable from A. M. Fushman to Yonov, December 12, 1927, Gumberg MSS, Box 6.

49. *Russian Gold* (New York, 1928), p. 70; Wilson, *Ideology and Economics*, p. 41. Quote from Hand to Davis, Polk, Wardwell, Gardiner & Reed, April 2, 1926, 861.51/2010, *FRUS*, 1926, 2: 907.

50. Quote from Olds to Muchnic, November 28, 1927, 861.51 Am3/-, *FRUS*, 1927, 3: 654. Sutton, *Western Technology*, pp. 173–74.

51. Memorandum from Gumberg to Schley, January 6, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A.

52. Mills to the secretary of state, February 14, 1928; Assistant Secretary of State William R. Castle to Mills, February 17, 1928, 861.51/2190, *FRUS*, 1928, 3: 827–29. "Memorandum Regarding \$5,000,000 Russian Gold Shipped to the Chase National Bank and the Equitable Trust Co.," March 12, 1928; memorandum from Gumberg to Schley, March 20, 1928; Schley to Korobkov, April 13, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A.

53. French Ambassador Claudel to the secretary of state, March 5, 1928, 861.51/2194; press release issued by the Treasury Department, March 6, 1928, *FRUS*, 1928, 3: 829–31. See also James K. Libbey, "New Study Areas for Soviet-American Relations: The Case of Russian Gold," *SHAFR Newsletter* 6 (June 1975): 16–18.

54. *Russian Gold*, pp. 31, 37.

55. Memorandum from Gumberg to Schley, April 19, 1928; press release issued by Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett, April 6, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A.

56. *New York Times*, May 5, 1928, p. 22. Resolution of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, undated; telegram from Gumberg to Morrow, April 17, 1928; Gumberg to Kirby Newburger, April 18, 1928; Gumberg to Robins, April 18, 1928; Gumberg to Tomashevsky, April 18, 1928; Gumberg to Borah, April 18, 1928; Gumberg to Korobkov, May 15, 1928; Gumberg to Carlton Beals, May 16, 1928; Gumberg to Schley, May 23, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A.

57. Memoranda from Gumberg to Schley, May 23, July 25, August 10, 1928; Gumberg to Callahan, June 2, 1928; Gumberg to Tomashevsky, July 27, 1928; Gumberg to Harold Kellock (secretary, Soviet Union Information Bureau), August 8, 1928; Gumberg to Arthur Fisher (Butler, Lamb, Foster & Pope), August 9, 1928;

Gumberg to Robins, August 13, 1928; Gumberg to Gilbert, August 15, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A.

58. Gumberg to Senator Robert La Follette, Jr., May 24, 1928; Gumberg to Robins, July 27, 1928; "Gumberg Schedule" from Gumberg to Schley, August 10, 1928; memorandum from Gumberg to Schley, August 10, 1928; quote from Gumberg to Schley, September 7, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A.

59. Gumberg to Schley, September 7, 1928; Gumberg to Clayton, September 7, 1928; cablegram from Gumberg to Schley, September 22, 1928; Gumberg to Smith, October 23, 1928; Gumberg to Russel C. Leffingwell, December 8, 1928; Gumberg to Borah, December 8, 1928; Gumberg to J. Reuben Clark, January 11, 1929, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 6A and 7.

60. Schley to Gumberg, September 10, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A.

61. Gumberg to Hannah Pickering (secretary, American-Russian Chamber of Commerce), September 4, 1928; Gumberg to Lucy Branham, October 23, December 12, 1928; Branham to Gumberg, January 2, 1929; Gumberg to Serebriakov, January 4, 1929; Gumberg to Charmion von Weigand, March 26, 1931; Gumberg to Herman Habicht, March 26, 1931; Gumberg to Duranty, March 27, 1931; Gumberg to Sam Lewisohn, July 13, 1931, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 6A, 7, 9A, and 9B. Marc Slonim, *Soviet Russian Literature: Writers and Problems, 1917–1967* (New York, 1967), pp. 61–64. Avraham Yarmolinsky to Libbey, February 13, 1973.

62. Quote from Gumberg to Duranty, December 12, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A.

63. Nicolson, *Dwight Morrow*, p. 350. Gumberg to Goodrich, December 26, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Box 6A. Robins to Borah, February 1, 1929, Borah MSS, Box 308. See also Goodrich to Gumberg, February 9, 1929; Gumberg to Goodrich, February 11, 1929, Gumberg MSS, Box 7.

64. Memoranda from Gumberg to Schley, January 7, 8, 1919; telegram from Scheinman to Gumberg, January 2, 1929; Gumberg to Marshall, January 3, 1929; Gumberg to Robins, January 8, 1929, Gumberg MSS, Box 7.

65. Memoranda from Gumberg to Schley, January 10, 11, February 14, March 28, April 17, 1929; Clark to Gumberg, January 12, 1929; Gumberg to La Follette, January 14, 1929; La Follette to Gumberg, January 15, 1929; Gumberg to Borah, January 15, 1929; memorandum from Gumberg to Callahan, January 15, 1929; Gumberg to Callahan, April 26, 1929; Walter Lippmann (editor, *New York World*) to Gumberg, May 3, 1929, Gumberg MSS, Box 7. Sutton, *Western Technology*, p. 173.

66. Davis to Borah, March 19, 1929; Borah to Davis, March 20, 1929, Borah MSS, Box 308.

67. *New York Times*, July 16, 1929, p. 5; July 16, p. 9; July 18, p. 9; July 19, p. 27; July 21, sec. 3, p. 3; July 23, p. 8; July 28, p. 5; July 28, sec. 3, p. 3; July 30, p. 6; August 3, p. 5; August 5, p. 27; August 11, p. 6; August 16, p. 9; August 18, sec. 3, p. 1. Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment*, pp. 236, 244–45. Gumberg to Gregg, April 26, 1929, Gumberg MSS, Box 7. Memorandum from Gumberg to Schley, April 15, 1926; printed brochure, "American-Russian Chamber of Commerce Delegation to U.S.S.R.—July–August, 1929"; Report by Gumberg to the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, September 1929, ARCC MSS, Box 21.

68. Gumberg to Goodrich, April 27, June 14, 1929; Gumberg to Borah, April 27, 1929; Gumberg to Robins, May 8, 17, June 14, 1929; Robins to Gumberg, May 13, 23, 1929, p. 2; William Hard to Gumberg, May 14, 1929; Evans Clark (director, Twentieth Century Fund) to Gumberg, May 14, June 4, 1929; Gumberg to Kellock,

May 17, 1929; Gumberg to Fritz Kuh (United Press, Berlin), May 22, 1929, Gumberg MSS, Box 7. Schley to Borah, June 8, 1929; Borah to Schley, June 10, 1929, Borah MSS, Box 308. Gumberg to Goodrich, June 6, 1929; letter of introduction for Gumberg from Schley, June 13, 1929; Gumberg to Callahan, June 17, 1929; letter of introduction for Gumberg from Charles S. Smith (AP chief, Foreign Service) to Joseph E. Sharkey (AP, Paris), June 19, 1929, Gumberg MSS, Box 7. Report by Gumberg to the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, September 1929, p. 2; printed brochure, "American-Russian Chamber of Commerce Delegation to U.S.S.R.—July–August, 1929," ARCC MSS, Box 21.

69. Report by Gumberg to the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, September 1929, pp. 1–8.

70. *New York Times*, August 17, 1929, p. 11.

71. Report by Gumberg to the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, September 1929, p. 5.

72. Fischer to Gumberg, September 9, 1927, March 17, May 3, 1928; Gumberg to Fischer, April 17, June 4, 1928, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 6 and 6A. See also Louis Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs: A History of the Relations between the Soviet Union and the Rest of the World, 1917–1929* (New York, 1930), vols. 1 and 2.

Chapter 10

1. Translation of *Pravda* article, L. Ninin, "Who Helps Whom?" February 8, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8A. See also *Pravda*, February 8, 1930.

2. John Reed, *Ten Days*, p. 101; Veniamin Gumberg quoted by Reed, *ibid.*, p. 112.

3. Ninin, "Who Helps Whom?" pp. 2–3.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

5. Gumberg to Schley, February 11, 1930; quote from Gumberg to Louis Fischer, March 7, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8A.

6. Gumberg to Raymond Robins, February 13, 1930; Schley to Bogdanov, February 13, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8A.

7. Thacher to Bogdanov, February 13, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8A.

8. Gumberg to Robins, February 13, 1930; Robins to Gumberg, February 14, 1930; Gumberg to Durant, February 26, 1930; Durant to Karl A. Bickel, March 8, April 22, 1930; Gumberg to Melnichansky, March 11, 1930; Gumberg to Yazikov, March 31, 1930; quote from Fischer to Gumberg, March 20, 1930; see also Gumberg to Fischer, March 31, April 9, 1930; Fischer to Gumberg, April 15, 1930; William Henry Chamberlin to Gumberg, May 17, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 8A and 8B.

9. Bogdanov to Schley, February 21, 1930; Gumberg to Robins, February 20, 1930; Gumberg to Fischer, March 7, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8A.

10. Translation of letter from Gumberg to the editor, *Pravda*, April 7, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8A. See also *Pravda*, April 7, 1930.

11. Gumberg gave Schley his letter in October, to become effective December 21, 1931. Gumberg to Schley, October 16, 1931; Schley to Gumberg, October 22, 1931, Gumberg MSS, Box 9B. Gumberg nearly resigned in June 1930. Floyd Odlum wanted Gumberg to join Atlas Corporation. An arrangement was made for Gumberg to continue with Chase and work part-time for Atlas. See Gumberg to Schley (marked "not sent"), June 6, 1930; Gumberg to Odlum, July 29, 1930; Gumberg to Schley, October 16, 1931, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 8B and 9B.

12. Gumberg to Yazikov, May 17, 1930; Gumberg to Schley, July 8, 1930; Gumberg to J. Pavlov, July 15, 1930; Gumberg to Robins, July 17, 1930; James P. Goodrich to Gumberg, July 19, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8B. See also "An Announcement by the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce of the Second Tour of Russia," June 30, 1930, ARCC MSS, Box 22. Ralph E. Towle to Gumberg, April 30, 1931; letter of introduction for Gumberg from Towle, May 4, 1931; letter of introduction for Gumberg from Dwight Morrow to Sir Esmond Ovey (British ambassador to Russia), May 8, 1931; letter of introduction for Gumberg from Bogdanov to A. Rosengoltz (commissar of foreign trade), May 8, 1931; cablegram from Gumberg (in Berlin) to Frankie Gumberg, May 27, June 9, 1931; Gumberg to J. C. Rovensky, May 29, 1931; Robins to Frankie Gumberg, June 17, 1931; Spencer Williams (in Moscow) to Gumberg (in Paris), June 18, 1931; Gumberg (in New York) to Robins, July 3, 1931, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 9A and 9B. Gumberg planned to go to Moscow in 1931 to prepare another businessmen's tour. Lack of American business interest and a gallbladder attack kept Gumberg from proceeding any further than Berlin. There are hints that Gumberg avoided entering Russia after 1929 so as not to compromise his family.

13. Robert P. Browder, *The Origins of Soviet-American Diplomacy* (Princeton, N.J., 1953), p. 37; quote from Gumberg to Schley, October 16, 1931, Gumberg MSS, Box 9B; "Agenda for Board of Directors Meeting November 21, 1930 Recess Club—12:45 P.M.," ARCC MSS, Box 22.

14. Gumberg to Williams, #CW10, August 21, 1930, ARCC MSS, Box 22; cablegram from Boris Skvirsky to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, August 13, 1930, *Dokumenty vneshnei politiki SSSR* (Moscow, 1967), 13: 457–58; Report from Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs N. Krestinsky to Politburo, September 18, 1931, *Dvp*, 1968, 14: 522–27.

15. Robins to Gumberg, February 22, June 2, 1930; telegram from Robins to Gumberg, March 15, 1930; Robins (in White House) to Gumberg, June 28, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 8A and 8B. Nicolson, *Dwight Morrow*, p. 381; Albert Marquis, ed., *Who's Who in America* (Chicago, 1930–1931), 16: 2110, 2170. Schley to Lamont, May 19, 1930; telegram from Lamont to Schley, May 20, 1930; memorandum to chamber's membership, June 14, 1930, pp. 1–2, ARCC MSS, Box 22. Kellock to Gumberg, May 21, 1930; Gumberg to Kellock, May 22, 1930; Gumberg to Senator William E. Borah, May 29, 1930; memorandum from Gumberg to Schley, May 29, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8B. The last document reveals the substance of the Gumberg-Cotton meeting. Gumberg to Goodrich, August 7, 1930; Gumberg to Fischer, August 20, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8B.

16. Gumberg to Robins, July 28, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8B.

17. Bogdanov to Bertron, July 28, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8B; "Memorandum on the Present Status of Trade between the U.S.S.R. and the United States Regarding the Five Major Imports," July 28, 1930, ARCC MSS, Box 22, p. 2.

18. "Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors American-Russian Chamber of Commerce—July 30, 1930 Bankers Club—12:45 P.M.," ARCC MSS, Box 22. Telegrams sent by Bertron, Cooper, and Fleming to Hoover, Mellon, and Lamont, July 30, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8B. Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment*, p. 232. Bogdanov to Gumberg, August 9, 1930, Gumberg MSS, Box 8B.

19. "Memorandum on the Present Status of Trade between the U.S.S.R. and the United States Regarding the Five Major Imports," July 28, 1930, ARCC MSS, Box 22, pp. 3–6.

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22. Presidential Appointment Diary, October 13, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York (hereafter cited as FDR MSS), PPF 1-0 (1), Box 185. See also Robins to Roosevelt, October 14, 28, 1933, FDR MSS, OF 200, Box 1. Gumberg to Robins, July 19, August 21, 1933; Robins to Gumberg, September 1, 1933, Gumberg MSS, Box 10B. Philip La Follette to Gumberg, August 17, 1933, Robins MSS, Box 25. H. M. Kannee to La Follette, August 15, 1933; unsigned "Memo for the President," October 13, 1933, FDR MSS, OF 200, Box 1.

23. Presidential Appointment Diary, March 20, 1933, FDR MSS, PPF 1-0 (1), Box 185. Gumberg to Williams, April 11, 1933, ARCC MSS, Box 23. Robins to Salmon O. Levinson, March 13, 17, 1933, Robins MSS, Box 25. P. La Follette to his family, February 19, 1933, Philip La Follette Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as La Follette MSS), Box 135. Memorandum of interview with Roosevelt, March 20, 1933, pp. 1–8; Edward Farley to La Follette, August 31, 1933, La Follette MSS, Boxes 25 and 26. Gumberg to La Follette, January 5, 1933; Gumberg to Robins, January 5, May 1, 12, 1933; cablegram from La Follette to Gumberg, March 7, 1933; Robins to Gumberg, March 13, 17, April 19, July 11, 1933; Margaret Robins to Gumberg, May 8, 1933; Williams to Gumberg, No. 1, May 15, 1933; Gumberg to M. Robins, June 2, 1933; Gumberg to Bogdanov, June 27, 1933, Gumberg MSS, Box 10B. In the fall of 1932 Robins experienced amnesia brought on by psychological stress due to his financial losses from the depression and to his vigorous speech-making tours in support of prohibition. Early in September he suddenly disappeared from Washington, D.C. He was found two months later roaming the hills near Asheville, North Carolina. The publicity surrounding his mental illness kept Robins from serious consideration for the Moscow post. See Gumberg to Borah, September 9, 1932; Borah to Gumberg, September 13, 1932; M. Robins to Gumberg, September 17, 1932; Gumberg to Thacher, October 1, 1932; M. Robins to Frankie and Gumberg, October 11, 1932; telegram from M. Robins to Gumberg, November 21, 22, 30, 1932, Gumberg MSS, Box 10A.

24. Browder, *Origins of Soviet-American Diplomacy*, pp. 142–43, 225–38. Senator Robert La Follette, Jr., to Roosevelt, March 6, 1933, PPF 6659. Jerome Davis to Louis Howe, March 15, 23, 1933; Howe to Davis, March 20, 1933; Senator George Norris of Nebraska to Marvin McIntyre (re: Cooper), March 31, 1933; McIntyre to Cooper, April 6, 1933; telegram from McIntyre to Cooper, April 11, 1933, OF 220-A, Box 4. Presidential Appointment Diary (re: Cooper), April 14, 1933, PPF 1-0 (1), Box 185. Telegram from Bertron to Roosevelt, October 21, 1933; telegram from Cooper to Roosevelt, October 21, 1933; memorandum from McIntyre to Roosevelt (re: Goodrich), November 3, 1933, FDR MSS, OF 220-A, Box 4. Davis, of Yale University, wanted to be the first ambassador to Russia. He was considered for the post by members on the periphery of Roosevelt's circle. See Davis to Borah, February 13, 15, March 20, 1933; Borah to Davis, February 14, 1933, Borah MSS, Box 352. See also Gumberg to Bogdanov, June 27, 1933, Gumberg MSS, Box 10B.

25. Press release from the Committee on Russian-American Relations of the American Foundation, October 30, 1933, FDR MSS, OF 220, Box 1.

26. Gumberg to Boris Skvirsky, November 21, 29, 1933; Skvirsky to Gumberg, November 27, 1933, Gumberg MSS, Box 10B. Quotes from Robins, "Testimonial Dinner," November 24, 1933, ARCC MSS, Box 23, pp. 5–6, and Robins to Gumberg, November 18, 1933, Gumberg MSS, Box 10B.

27. Villard to Gumberg, November 29, 1933; see also Gumberg to Villard, December 13, 1933, Gumberg MSS, Box 10B.

28. *New York Times*, May 31, 1939, p. 23. Robins to Gumberg, November 8, 20, December 8, 19, 1931; Gumberg to Robins, November 11, 18, 1931, November 6, 1936, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 9B and 13A. Cover letter from Eliot H. Sharp to John Donaldson, March 20, 1933, containing manuscript entitled "Prospering in the Midst of Depression: The Story of Atlas," pp. 1–21; Atlas Corporation Report, October 31, 1937, pp. 1–20, AC MSS, Boxes 17 and 20.

29. The ARCC MSS, Boxes 21–23, contain extensive correspondence between Gumberg and Williams. Quote from Skvirsky to Gumberg, February 15, 1936; see also Gumberg to Skvirsky, February 20, 1936; Alexis Neymann, first secretary of the Soviet Embassy, to Gumberg, January 7, 1935; Gumberg to Troyanovsky, June 23, December 2, 1936, November 1, December 17, 1937, April 30, 1938; Gumberg to Robins, September 10, 1936, January 14, April 2, 9, June 16, December 21, 31, 1937; Gumberg to Judge Learned Hand, October 29, 1937, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 12, 13, 13A, 14, 14A, and 15.

30. Farnsworth, *William C. Bullitt*, p. 154. A complete catalog, listing the failures of recognition, has been prepared by Donald G. Bishop, *The Roosevelt-Litvinov Agreements: The American View* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1965). Quote from Davies to Gumberg, December 16, 1936; see also John Marshall to Gumberg, November 23, 1936; Virginia Burdick, executive secretary, The American Russian Institute for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union, to Gumberg, December 18, 1936; Gumberg to Borah, January 15, 1937; Gumberg to Davies, April 9, 1937, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 13A and 14.

31. James K. Libbey, "Liberal Journals and the Moscow Trials of 1936–38," *Journalism Quarterly* 52 (Spring 1975): 85–92, 137. Gumberg to Yazikov, April 9, 1930; Gumberg to Fischer, August 5, 1930, July 9, 1931; Fischer to Gumberg, August 23, 1930, December 20, 1934; Gumberg to Robins, February 25, 1932, October 29, 1937; Williams to Gumberg, No. 8, February 2, 1934, Gumberg MSS, Boxes 8A, 8B, 9B, 10, 11, 11A, and 14A. Gumberg to Williams, November 18, 1938, ARCC MSS, Box 23. In December 1934 Sergei Kirov, member of the Communist party's ruling Politburo, was assassinated. His death signaled the start of the wave of terror referred to as the "Great Purges" in Russia. Troyanovsky, then in Moscow, personally intervened with Genrikh Yagoda, chief of the NKVD (now KGB), to make certain Gumberg's brothers would not be implicated in the assassination. It was then that Fischer warned Gumberg to stay out of Soviet Russia until his brothers had been completely rehabilitated. To the very end of his life Gumberg sent money and clothes to his family. There are references to his sister in the Gumberg MSS so fleeting, however, that the only safe statement that can be made is that she lived in Moscow. After 1929 Gumberg totally supported his father, who had become an invalid as a result of a stroke. Gumberg sent his father money through Veniamin until February 1930, after which Gumberg forwarded funds through Chase and Gosbank. Gumberg's father died in January 1934. In the correspondence cited above there are brief references to nephews and nieces and other Gumberg relatives (many of whom Gumberg did not know, including Veniamin's wife). Williams regularly dis-

pensed funds and food to these sundry Gumberg relatives on behalf of Alexander. Finally, there is a one-sentence reference to a half-sister who died presumably of natural causes in 1930. Williams to Gumberg, June 1, 1938, Gumberg MSS, Box 15. At the Morrow funeral Frankie broke down entirely and Alexander admitted to Robins, "As you know, I am not subject to sentimental outbursts, but as they carried that box out I felt pretty sick." See Gumberg to Robins, October 7, 1931; see also Robins to Gumberg, October 9, 1931; Gumberg to Fischer, October 14, 1931; M. Robins to Gumberg, October 17, 1931, Gumberg MSS, Box 9B.

32. Davies published his official letter interpreting the trial for the secretary of state in *Mission to Moscow*, pp. 32–46. Quote from Gumberg to Rachel and Robert La Follette, Jr., April 26, 1937, Gumberg MSS, Box 14. Gumberg was in Washington at this time because the Securities and Exchange Commission investigated Atlas Corporation. The hearings exhausted Gumberg; Abe Fortas to Libbey, February 22, 1973. Fortas, on leave from Yale Law School, counseled the SEC in that 1937 investigation.

33. Libbey, "Liberal Journals," p. 89. Gumberg to Dewey, May 11, 1937; Gumberg to Robins, May 11, 1937, Gumberg MSS, Box 14.

34. Quote from Gumberg to Robins, February 18, 1939, Gumberg MSS, Box 16.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY



SINCE ALEXANDER GUMBERG never wrote his memoirs, this volume would not have been possible had it not been for his habit of preserving his papers, which were donated by his wife to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin eleven years after his death. The manuscript collection contains thirty-four boxes of materials divided unevenly into three component parts: Gumberg's correspondence and memorabilia (twenty-seven boxes), papers pertaining to the Atlas Corporation (three boxes) and to the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce (four boxes). Coalescence of these groups of papers has had a debilitating effect on the scholarship of American business history and of American-Russian relations, for too few students of history have consulted the Gumberg MSS and thus even fewer have unlocked the abundant information found in the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce Papers.

William Appleman Williams suggested that "Gumberg left a record of his efforts because he realized that the historian, like other men, can never understand the present—or what occurred in the past—unless he also knows what could have happened." It would be easy to agree heartily with Williams's answer to this most perplexing question of why Gumberg bothered to save so many of the letters he received and sent. There are three less lofty and more prosaic reasons to explain Gumberg's "foresight." First, the numbers of letters Gumberg kept grew dramatically after the Russian Revolution and after V. I. Lenin asked him to play a role in interpreting the Revolution for the American people. Second, the Rus-

sian-American found himself embroiled in controversies among radical Americans immediately after his return from Russia. Preservation of his papers, then and throughout his life, enabled Gumberg to confute and disarm his critics at home and abroad. Third, Gumberg saved his papers as a supreme act of flattery in mimicking the actions of his mentor and lifelong friend Raymond Robins. Through the efforts of Williams, the Robins papers were reconstructed and preserved from the ravages of the Florida clime and were also placed in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. This formidable collection of documents complements appropriately the Gumberg papers and numerous students of history including Williams, Raymond Kassab, Anne Vincent Meiburger, and Neil V. Salzman have used the Robins MSS as a basis for M.A. theses or Ph.D. dissertations. Despite all this scholarly activity with the Robins MSS, it is surprising that only two biographies, one out-of-date and the other incomplete, of this colorful personality have been published: William Hard's *Raymond Robins' Own Story* (New York, 1920) and Meiburger's *Efforts of Raymond Robins toward the Recognition of Soviet Russia and the Outlawry of War, 1917-1933* (Washington, D.C., 1958). Additional manuscript collections held by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and of some importance to this study were the papers of James A. Frear, Philip F. La Follette, DeWitt C. Poole, and Edward A. Ross.

In some respects this Gumberg biography was undertaken twenty years too late. Many of Gumberg's contemporaries are dead or in their dotage. Nevertheless, a large number of people who knew Gumberg or possess special information about his activities wrote or told me of their observations: Paul B. Anderson, Lisa von Borowsky, John B. Davies, Jerome Davis, Abe Fortas, Harry Freeman, John I. Gaines, Vivian Garets, Walter Lippmann, Sergei Losev, Floyd B. Odium, Zenaid Pelzer, Nadia Popov, David Sinclair, Jessica Smith, Edward Tripp, Francis B. Waters, E. Raymond Wilson, Avrahm Yarmolinsky. Finally, I tapped additional primary sources of information by viewing, or corresponding with directors of, over two dozen manuscript collections around the country. In most cases I gleaned material related to, but not necessarily about, Gumberg from the National Archives, Library of Congress, American Red Cross Headquarters, Swarthmore College, New York Pub-

lic Library, Indiana State Library, and the special depositories of presidential papers held in Columbus, Ohio (Warren G. Harding), Hyde Park, New York (Franklin D. Roosevelt), and West Branch, Iowa (Herbert Hoover). At times, trying to find supplemental sources on Gumberg proved to be the chore of a sleuth. If future scholars locate a needle or two that I missed from the Gumberg haystack, their discoveries will be a welcome blessing and not an embarrassing oversight.

In reconstructing Gumberg's life, I have been blessed by a fortuitous circumstance. Gumberg's contemporaries wrote most of their comments on the Russian-American's activities at the very time in his life when he kept the fewest personal documents. For example, all the Americans save Gumberg who made the famous truck ride through Petrograd composed and published their versions: John Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (New York, 1919); Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia* (New York, 1918); Albert Rhys Williams, *Through the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1921); Bessie Beatty, *The Red Heart of Russia* (New York, 1918). Additional memoirs that shed some light on Gumberg's life in 1917–1918 include R. H. Bruce Lockhart, *British Agent* (New York, 1933); Edgar G. Sisson, *One Hundred Red Days* (New Haven, Conn., 1931); and Albert Rhys Williams, *Journey into Revolution* (Chicago, 1969). The latter is particularly important because Frankie Adams Gumberg helped edit the volume. Only a few other memoirs touch briefly on Gumberg's work after the 1917–1918 period: William Henry Chamberlin, *The Confessions of an Individualist* (New York, 1940); Max Eastman, *Heroes I Have Known* (New York, 1942); and Louis Fischer, *Men and Politics* (New York, 1941).

An extraordinarily large number of secondary sources devote one or more sentences to Gumberg. Generally and unfortunately scholars have come to rely too much on the research presented in William A. Williams's *American Russian Relations, 1781–1947* (New York, 1952) and in George F. Kennan's *Russia Leaves the War* (New York, 1956) and *The Decision to Intervene* (New York, 1958). It is not that these diplomatic historians are necessarily deficient in scholarship, but almost all later students of Soviet-American relations have not bothered to investigate the mountains of materials found in the Gumberg MSS. As a result, Gumberg jumps into the

scenario of some two dozen books as merely a stick figure or, even worse, as an unfathomable mystery man who resembles N. N. Sukhanov's famous characterization of Stalin ("a gray blur") during the Russian Revolution. Nevertheless, this study has benefited from the careful reading of numerous monographs and biographies and the notes give credit where credit is due. The most helpful published works have been Edward M. Bennett, *Recognition of Russia* (Waltham, Mass., 1970); Robert Paul Browder, *The Origins of Soviet-American Diplomacy* (Princeton, N.J., 1953); Thomas H. Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921–1922* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1970); Mikhail V. Condoide, *Russian-American Trade* (Columbus, Ohio, 1946); Beatrice Farnsworth, *William C. Bullitt and the Soviet Union* (Bloomington, Ind., 1967); Herbert Feis, *The Diplomacy of the Dollar, 1919–1932* (New York, 1966); Peter G. Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment, 1917–1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967); Hermann Hagedorn, *The Magnate* (New York, 1935); Granville Hicks, *John Reed* (New York, 1937); Christopher Lasch, *The American Liberals and the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1962); Robert J. Maddox, *William E. Borah and American Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge, La., 1969); Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare* (New York, 1964); Harold Nicolson, *Dwight Morrow* (New York, 1935); Henry K. Norton, *The Far Eastern Republic of Siberia* (New York, 1923); Frederick L. Schuman, *American Policy toward Russia since 1917* (New York, 1928); Leonid I. Strakhovsky, *American Opinion about Russia, 1917–1920* (Toronto, 1961); Antony C. Sutton, *Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development 1917 to 1930* (Stanford, Calif., 1968); Pauline Tompkins, *American-Russian Relations in the Far East* (New York, 1949); Betty Miller Unterberger, *America's Siberian Expedition, 1918–1920* (Durham, N.C., 1956); John Chalmers Vinson, *The Parchment Peace* (Athens, Ga., 1955) and *William E. Borah and the Outlawry of War* (Athens, Ga., 1957); Robert D. Warth, *The Allies and the Russian Revolution* (Durham, N.C., 1954); Benjamin Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia, 1921–1923* (Stanford, Calif., 1974); and Joan Hoff Wilson, *Ideology and Economics* (Columbia, Mo., 1974).

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