

# *From Washington to Moscow*

## *The Lend-Lease Story*

*From Major Jordan's Diaries.*

Harcourt, Brace. 284 pp. \$3.50.

MAJOR GEORGE RACEY JORDAN'S book, entitled *From Major Jordan's Diaries*, furnishes further evidence of what is now generally accepted by the American people as a fact — that our leadership during World War II was gullible and stupid in its relations with the Soviet Union. To this extent it is a valuable document and deserves a wide readership. However, the subtitle of Major Jordan's book indicates that it is "the inside story of Soviet Lend-Lease from Washington to Great Falls to Moscow." It is with regard to this "inside story" that I find the book disappointing.

When we look back, it seems incredible that we should have been taken in so completely by Stalin and his lieutenants. Just as Hitler had announced in advance his objectives and the means of reaching them in his *Mein Kampf*, so Marx, Lenin, and Stalin had set forth theirs in writings covering many decades. With the example before us of Hitler's carrying out his base designs,

we might have been at least suspicious that the Russian dictator would ultimately carry out his.

I think that Major Jordan puts his finger on the nerve of the matter when he quotes a conversation between President Roosevelt and William C. Bullitt. The latter had protested against too great reliance on Stalin; the President replied that he did not dispute Mr. Bullitt's facts or logic, but he just had a "hunch" that Stalin wanted nothing but security for his country. Roosevelt credited Harry Hopkins with the same opinion, and added that if we were generous with Stalin during the war Stalin would work with us for peace and democracy.

There can be no doubt that the attitude of the President was reflected throughout the government, and there can be no doubt that his confidante, Harry Hopkins, encouraged the President in this attitude. Major Jordan accounts in great detail, and I am sure with reasonable accuracy, for the Lend-Lease aid given the Soviet Union. On the other hand, I think that much too much of the book is dedicated to

building a case against Harry Hopkins, with the implication that he acted against the interests of the United States in his efforts to further the interests of the Soviet Union. I knew Harry Hopkins quite well during the war and am convinced that he was a great patriot. As Secretary of the General Staff, I saw General Marshall call on Harry Hopkins time and again to urge some action or other on the President which General Marshall thought was necessary to the prosecution of the war. General Marshall, I am sure, felt that he could always rely on Hopkins' aid. Later, when I was head of the United States Military Mission in Moscow, I had long discussions with Hopkins and our Ambassador, Averell Harriman, as to how the United States position could best be advanced in meetings between Hopkins and Stalin.

Major Jordan quotes me as stating that "with respect to Russian aid, I always felt that Hopkins carried out his mission with a zeal which approached fanaticism." I did write that, and I believe it. In his efforts to support the Soviet war effort I am convinced, as Major Jordan apparently is, that Hopkins went too far both as to priorities and in interpreting the Lend-Lease law. As a result, American interests suffered and Soviet interests gained. However, I am equally convinced that Hopkins' obsession was an honest one and should in no way be

construed as unpatriotic or disloyal.

Major Jordan emphasizes particularly that Hopkins was instrumental in helping the Soviet Union obtain material and information needed in the development of the atom bomb. He also stresses the postwar value of so much of the Lend-Lease equipment that was sent to the Soviet Union with Hopkins' approval.

It is very probable that material was sent to the Soviet Union that was helpful to it in the development of the atom bomb. To a large extent this was unavoidable because of the secrecy that of necessity surrounded our Manhattan Project; because of legitimate wartime uses which Russia could make of some such materials other than in atomic energy development; and, finally, because refusal to send such material might have pointed too sharply to our own efforts in the atomic field. Indeed, in one case Major Jordan states that General Groves, wartime head of our atomic energy development, approved a shipment because he felt that disapproval would have jeopardized the secrecy of our own activities. I am sure that no one in the Lend-Lease administration or on the Russian Protocol Committee, other than Harry Hopkins, knew of our atomic research. It is not surprising therefore that in the ordinary course of Lend-Lease administration items of possible application to atomic development were sent on to Russia.

As for the materials sent to Russia

that had postwar value, Major Jordan is right in saying that far too much was sent. Particularly was this true after the end of the war was in sight — and it was late in the war that the Soviet Union sought most of such materials. Such items as oil-producing machinery, port facilities, locomotives, and machine tools were sent to the Soviet Union when it was fairly obvious that they could not be installed and used before the end of the war. If such stupidity on our part is excusable at all, it is only on the grounds that it was difficult to say that any item, in Russian

hands, might not conceivably contribute to the war effort, and it was impossible to foresee exactly when the war would end.

To repeat, then, I believe that Major Jordan has given a reasonably accurate description of the magnitude and character of our Lend-Lease aid to Russia. I differ with him only with respect to the implications the book leaves with me concerning those responsible for the Lend-Lease administration and, particularly, Harry Hopkins.

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### ***Engels on Russian Diplomacy (1890)***

» The only wars which can suit [the] purpose [of the Russian diplomats] are those in which Russia's allies bear the brunt of the burden, sacrifice their territory to the devastation of the battlefield, provide the great bulk of the fighting men — wars in which Russian troops, assigned the role of reserves, are spared from most engagements, but to whom in all great battles the honor of the final decision is reserved with relatively slight sacrifices entailed. . . . However a war under such favorable circumstances is not always to be had, and therefore Russian diplomacy prefers to utilize, for its own ends, the conflicting interests and greediness of the other powers, to set these powers against each other and exploit these enmities to the advantage of the Russian policy of conquest.

FRIEDRICH ENGELS, *quoted in* THE RUSSIAN MENACE TO EUROPE, *The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1952.*

# BOOKS IN SHORT

## Female Falstaff

*Talullah.* By Talullah Bankhead.  
Harper. 335 pp. \$3.95.

ALONG WITH a strong yearning to play Shakespeare at some point in their careers, the queens of the theater seem to share an urge to put their thoughts between book covers. The late Gertrude Lawrence, Eva Le Galliene, Katherine Cornell, and Helen Hayes are just a few of the more notable actresses turned authors. This illustrious sorority is now joined by unquestionably the rowdiest, most energetic and publicized of the lot — Talullah Bankhead.

The book's blurb writer relates that Miss Bankhead has at last "been persuaded to tell the whole story"; but the actress tempers this statement by declaring that "no actor can resist a bid to purge himself publicly," and that only her youth held her literary talents in check (she had intended waiting until seventy). Of course, it isn't quite the *whole* story. "I've told as much of the truth as I dare, without winning the frown of the Postmaster General. In the interests of good taste I've not blueprinted my delinquencies. I've ducked the truth when it would injure others."

One of the confessed motives for the book being written was to il-

luminare the legend that has grown up around her name. Thus are brought forth for exhaustive review the various canards made about the lady, which, in the reading, seem to have been invented by herself to shock the yokels. Yes, says she, she drinks, but swears that she never missed a performance because of it. No, she does not take dope, but once tried it on a bet. Yes, she is a lady of romantic dalliance. No, this; yes, that — and so on. She claims a good share of the responsibility for building the legend of moral waywardness that has established her as the theater's No. 1 Hellion. For the reader the question inevitably arises: But who cares?

Over the years Talullah may not have always indicated by her self-confessed actions that she knew right from wrong, but she leaves no doubt as to where her affections lie. Her characterizations of her enemies, real or imaginary, are succinct: The Governor of New York is dismissed with "I'd be suspicious of Thomas E. Dewey if he was chairman of the Democratic National Convention." Of playwright Lillian Hellman she notes: "I could never rejoice in her company." Of the late Alexander Woollcott: "He was vindictive, shockingly petty in a feminine fashion, given to excesses when express-