

● PSF

Russia

1942-43

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**MOLOTOV, VYACHESLAW MIKHAILOVICH**

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

**Governmental Position:** Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

**Position in Communist Party:** Member of the Political Bureau and of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party; delegate to the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Congresses of the Communist International.

Real name is Skriabin; a Slav. Born in 1890 of a worker's family; entered the Party in 1906; engaged in revolutionary work prior to the war and imprisoned and exiled many times. Following the February (1917) revolution, he became President of the Bolshevik faction of the Petrograd Soviet. Following the October (1917) revolution, he was appointed President of the Soviet of National Economy of the Northern Region; in 1922, appointed a member of the Central Committee of the Party working as an assistant to Stalin. Became a member of the powerful and exclusive Political Bureau in 1924, in which he has since served; in 1926 he was appointed a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International and in 1928 was a member of the Commission which drafted the Program of the Communist International. Prior to 1930, he was one of the outstanding figures in the Communist International.

In 1930 Molotov was made President of the Soviet of People's Commissars, a position corresponding to that of Prime Minister. In May 1939 he relieved Litvinoff of the position of People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. In May 1941 Stalin took over personally the position of President of the Soviet of People's Commissars. Molotov has continued since that time as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

See NOTE on following page.

## NOTE

Molotov is considered to be one of the ablest executives in the Soviet Union although he has been abroad very little. He is Russian by nationality and may be said to belong to the group of Soviet leaders who look at world events through Russian eyes. His outlook, therefore, differs from that of those Soviet leaders who have been refugees in Europe or the United States or who in some other manner have had considerable contacts with Western European culture. He has held Stalin's confidence over a considerable period of time because:

1. His administrative ability has made him valuable to Stalin;
2. His typical Russian approach to problems has made it easier for Stalin to understand him;
3. He has always carried out Stalin's policies and instructions in a painstaking and effective manner; and
4. He has hitherto depended entirely upon his relations with Stalin for his position and has not endeavored to build up a political machine of his own or to create a personal following.

In carrying on negotiations he has been noted for his frankness which sometimes amounts to bluntness and he has the reputation of being less disinclined to make concessions than Stalin.

Molotov's wife, Zhemehuzhina, is Jewish. She has been an outstanding woman administrator. She successfully built up the Soviet trust which manufactured and distributed cosmetics and toilet articles. Later she was in charge of the Soviet fish industry. A year or so ago, however, she retired from these administrative positions. She has a reputation of being one of the most smartly dressed and interesting women in the Soviet Union.

It is understood that Molotov speaks no foreign languages.

January 8, 1942

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1. L. feels much better than he did when I last saw him. Quite a bit more cheerful and genial.

2. In regard to Steinhardt, I should say that he is not too enthusiastic. We got into a little discussion of career diplomats versus non-career diplomats. He said that you never could tell about non-career diplomats, that Davies had turned out to be an excellent ambassador, that Davies went about the country and acquainted himself with people and conditions, whereas Bullit was very, very bad. One gathers that he thinks Steinhardt comes somewhere in between.

On my remark that it was rather precarious to send a man from a large embassy like Moscow to Ankara, he said, "Well, Ankara may be a very important place now."

3. His face really lit up when I asked him whether he liked F. D. R.'s speech. I asked this question quickly, and I should say that he had no time to govern his reaction. He said it was a real fighting speech, and seemed very much pleased with it. He succeeded, however, in getting back on guard by the time I asked him how it was received in Moscow and said that he should think very well.

As to the production figures in the speech, he said, "Well, even if they don't do it, if they do only eighty per cent, or less, it will be a great thing and the figures will frighten the enemy."

4. He offered a gratuitous comment with regard to so-called "Free" movements, particularly those arising in Axis countries (Strasser he mentioned by name), which he feels are just attempts to try to stave off the consequences of impending defeat. From this I would gather that he thinks but little of the point of view which would try to convince the

the German people, etc., that everything is going to be rosy for them when they get licked so they won't fight so hard.

5. My impression was that he was not anxious to encourage the idea that a separate peace can be made with Finland. This may, or may not, have any connection with reports current in some circles that the Russians want Finland as an autonomous state within the Soviet Union after the war. Personally, I should think a peace with Finland, guaranteeing, as it would, the safety of the Murmansk railway, would be of immense value to the Russians at this time. But L. was definitely sour on this idea. He said he did not think that the Finns were free agents, that Mannerhiem in particular was a German puppet, and that if the thing were left to the Finnish people that they would have made peace long ago. But I have the impression that this is window dressing for his real ideas.

6. L. seemed distinctly pessimistic about Singapore and the Netherlands Indies, speaking with some hint of resignation as to the situation which would result if these areas should be lost, and if thereafter the Japanese were able to concentrate their army for an attack on the Soviet far eastern possessions.

He seemed particularly disappointed over the British retirements in Malaya, which I tried to explain to him were strategic in their nature, pointing out that the British had not yet involved their main Malayan forces. His general attitude remained gloomy on this point.

Interpreting this, I suggest that what is needed most to get Soviet military action against Japan is a resounding Allied success in the South China Sea, plus indications that the Japanese armies are going to be kept plenty busy elsewhere.

7. He gave me the impression that he does not feel that the Russians are any too strong in the Far East. When he did this two weeks

ago, I had the feeling that he was rather playing down the Russian strength in that part of the world. The possibility should, however, not be overlooked that in addition to those far eastern divisions known to have arrived on the Western Front, for example in the Rostov area, there may be other divisions in transit, and there is a possibility that a central reserve may have been formed somewhere in central Siberia which could in case of need be sent either to the main front in Europe, or to the middle east, or to the Caucasus, as necessity might arise. These troops would not be immediately available for the Far East, and if they were committed there before the Russians were certain that they would not be needed elsewhere, the situation might be embarrassing.

8. He said that there was no evidence in possession of the Russian staff which would indicate that any considerable number of German troops had been transferred from the Russian front to any other theatre of operations; contrary to opinions expressed in the press, he said that Italian troops had fought well on the whole in Russia, the Hungarians very well, but the Roumanians very poorly.

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1. The Turkish Government adheres to its policy of neutrality striving to remain outside the war, but Germany is exercising a continuous systematic pressure on Turkey.
2. Since the middle of November up to now preparations are going on for the arrival of additional German troops. Bridges and highways are being repaired, accomodation for German troops is being prepared, special stocks of food are being accumulated, rolling-stock is being concentrated, a census of horses and transport facilities is being made.
3. There are in Greek Thrace up to five German and two Italian divisions. Four Bulgarian divisions are on the Turkish-Bulgarian frontier. There are arriving at Svilengrad German troop-trains with armament and munition. Fortifications are being erected under the guidance of German specialists along the frontier and the Black Sea coast. The fifty-kilometer area along the frontier is under control of German military authorities. The coast defenses are being strengthened by large-caliber guns and anti-aircraft guns. The net of airports is being widened at Varna and the Danube ports. About 100 barges for landing are being built.

From Litvinov (Stalin) ↗  
Mr Jan. 11 1942

Fisher

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*file  
Confidential*

January 16, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HARRY HOPKINS

Will you get Stettinius to  
check on this and clear?

F.D.R.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

This cable refers to ships. The only way  
we can possibly settle this thing is for Jerry  
Land to get more ships to go to Russia.

We have the material at seaboard but we  
simply cannot get ships to take it.

The letter you signed to Land yesterday,  
I hope, will do the trick.

H.L.H.

FH  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (JC)

Moscow

Dated January 14, 1942

Rec'd 4:56 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington

10, January 14, 3 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

SECRET FOR GENERAL SPALDING FROM FAYHONVILLE

In Kremlin conference Vice Chairman Sov. Nav.  
Com. Mikoyan and other Soviet officials reviewed  
question of American supplies to Russia. Complaints  
cabled you yesterday from Prutikov were all repeated  
especially reference non-delivery of T.N.T. tanks  
airplanes and specifications for nitro-glycerin  
powder.

Mikoyan desired to emphasize five other points:  
First, unsatisfactory shipping conditions and failure  
of the Maritime Commission to furnish the forty-nine  
ships promised; only seventeen made voyage and four  
forced to return to port for causes which Commissar  
considers avoidable through better administration;  
Soviet representatives in United States have difficulty  
finding any centralized authority with which to deal  
on shipping matters and Commissar cited British  
system

-2-#10, January 14, 3 p.m. (SECTION ONE) from Moscow.

system of centralized military control over shipping as highly successful; Commissar fears we underestimate possibility of sabotage; second, difficulties in securing release of machine tools; Commissar understands that up to November 7, 2795 machine tools had been promised and agreement reached with firms as to <sup>type</sup> quantities, prices, and specifications but that Administration has released only 47; Commissar emphasizes these machine tools absolutely necessary at earliest possible date to enable Soviet munitions industry to continue operation in relocated factories.

THOMPSON

IMS

LM  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. . (SC)

(Moscow)  
Kuibyshew

Dated January 14, 1942

Rec'd 1:31 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

10, January 14, 3 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

Third, need for the promised 300,000 kilometers of field telephone wire is urgent; only 36,000 released in United States and only 10,000 have reached Soviet Union; Mikoyan is badgered daily by Defense Commissar to keep his promises to supply this item since it is indispensable in plans to reoccupy Soviet territory and prevent escape of German Army; fourth, Mikoyan pleased with your optimistic forecast of January deliveries received by him January 12 but emphasizes that deficiencies from fourth quarter 1941 should be made up as soon as possible; five, for that portion of American supplies delivered by southern routes Soviet Government prefers to take over airplanes, tanks and trucks at Persian Gulf ports directly from supply bases established and run by Americans and would like information on proposed American organization for this purpose;

-2- #10, January 14, 3 p.m. (SECTION TWO) from (Moscow)  
Kuibyshev.

this purpose; Mikoyan has trained adequate numbers of pilots and chauffeurs to accomplish this; Mikoyan prefers Abadan as principle gulf base; can use Basra temporarily for airplane assembly but these operations should be transferred to Bandar Shahpur or Abadan; Mikoyan wholly disapproves Karachi-Mashed route as wasteful of time in getting materials to the front, very hard on vehicles and too much preliminary work necessary, and thinks that for land cargoes principle point of reception must be Tabriz.

Mikoyan stated with greatest seriousness that Soviet military plans were based on our promises which in many cases have not been fulfilled and that the only hope of preventing escape of German armies lies in immediately making up deficient deliveries. I conclude that his position in Government is prejudiced by his inability to make promised deliveries to Red Army.

THOMPSON

GW