REICH AIDS LINKED TO SOVIET ATTACK

Berlin Plan to Use 'Bolshevist Danger' for Peace Pressure

Seen in Drive at Finland

STALIN MISJUDGED FINNS

'Real War,' in Which Sweden May Act, Not to Germans' Liking, Observer Says

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North American Newspaper Alliance, Inc.

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, Dec. 19—

I have just been able to ascertain, through an authoritative source that I cannot disclose, the reasons why Russia attacked Finland and why it will not be clear whether Russia and Germany are marching together or not. It is a fantastic story, but all this war is fantastic.

My informant declares the Russian attack on Finland was really Germany's peace move. That seemed extremely absurd, and I think so, but my informant, who, I assure you, knows what he is talking about, continued:

"You have to understand that Germany did not want war against France and Britain, and did not think they would fight for Poland. Once the war started, the Germans wanted peace. Therefore, they tried to bring pressure on the neutrals, first Italy, then Holland, Belgium and Switzerland."

"Count Ciano went to Germany, but Mussolini refused to put forth the German peace offer. Then the Germans tried pressure on the three other neutrals by threats of invasion. That also failed to work, and meanwhile it became clear that the British resolution to fight the war to a finish was stiff-necked."

"So the next pressure," my informant continued, "was put on Finland, but this time by the Russians. That coincided with Russian desires, because the Russians are afraid—probably wrongly, but afraid—of an ultimate Allied and German combination against the U.S.S.R. For that reason, Russia wanted to occupy a strong position in Finland, notably Hanko, in much the same way as she occupied positions in Latvia and Estonia."

"That served the German aims, as I said before, because the Germans hoped the Russian threat to Finland would scare France and Britain toward readiness to deal with Germany in order to counteract the Bolshevist danger. And also it would affect the Scandinavian neutrals in a similar way."

"I know this sounds too Machiavellian to be true, but I think it is how things happened. The Russians, you must understand, wanted defensive points in Finland which might ultimately be used against Germany. Nevertheless, the Russians were still willing to play the German game, which they knew was the German game, because for the time being, it was their game too."

"That might indicate a measure of Russo-German collaboration or cooperation or whatever you care to call it."

"But the Russians made one error. They had been led to believe by their representatives in Finland and by Finnish Communists that Finland would not resist any more than Latvia and Estonia. When Finland showed signs of refusing to accept the Soviet demands, Joseph Stalin himself, who attended seven out of eight meetings between the Finnish envoy and Soviet Premier V. M. Molotov, suddenly said, 'In that case, nishkevi! boogt—there's nothing doing.'"

"From that moment, my informant declared, he knew war was inevitable. "To clinch matters," he said, 'the Russians tried a final fright-attack by bombing Helsinki, which, instead of making the Finns give way, steelted them to resistance."

"The Russian excuse for beginning hostilities was an alleged Finnish bombardment of the Russian frontier village of Mainila, a few miles from Turivoki. As it happened, my friend, Herbert Eliot of The Christian Science Monitor, was lunching with a Finnish outpost at that very point on Nov. 29, the day before the war began, and heard the radio talking about this bombardment. But there was no such bombardment, and all was quiet."

"At this point, my informant said, 'The German peace plan faded from the picture and the Russians went ahead in their erroneous idea that Finland would feel like a ripe plum.'"

"I do not think that the Germans contemplated such a possibility—I mean a real war between Russia and Finland," he continued; "and now I do not think they like it at all. But whether that will mean they will allow Sweden or any one else to give material aid to Finland is something which cannot be guessed."

"Of course, this is one of the most burning questions in Sweden, how soon and to what extent 'material assistance'—that phrase, be it remembered, was embodied in the declaration of the new Swedish Government—will be given to Finland."

"I am inclined to think that, despite all risks and peril, it will be given and given soon. That will be because the Swedes have stirred and burst the ice of pacifism that has bound them for more than a hundred years and are beginning to say, 'It is better to die fighting than to accept any alien yoke, be it Russian or be it German.'"

"There is quite a strong feeling here that Sweden should not have abstained from voting to expel Russia from the League of Nations, and, in short, it looks as if public opinion will soon overwhelm the government's prudence."