

# REICH AIMS 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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STOCKHOLM, Sweden, Dec. 16—  
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 Rus-  
sian 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 talk-  
ing 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. Thereupon, they  
tried to bring pressure on the neu-  
trals, Italy first, then Holland, Bel-  
gium 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 inva-  
sion. 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 in-  
formant continued, "was put on  
Finland, but this time by the Rus-  
sians. 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 Fin-  
land, notably Hangoe, in much the  
same way as she occupied positions  
in Latvia and Estonia.

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

"I know this sounds too machia-  
vellian to be true, but I think it is  
how things happened. The Rus-  
sians, you must understand, wanted  
defensive points in Finland which  
might ultimately be used against  
Germany. Nevertheless, the Rus-  
sians 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 Fin-  
land would not resist any more than  
Latvia and Estonia. When Finland  
showed signs at Moscow of refus-  
ing to accept the Soviet demands,  
Joseph Stalin himself, who attended  
seven out of eight meetings between  
the Finnish envoys and Soviet Pre-  
mier V. M. Molotoff, suddenly said,  
'In that case, nizhevo ni booget—  
there's nothing doing.'"

From that moment, my informant  
declared, he knew war was inevita-  
ble.

"To clinch matters," he said, "the  
Russians tried a final fright-attack  
by bombing Helsinki, which, in-

stead of making the Finns give  
way, steeled them to resistance.  
The Russian excuse for beginning  
hostilities was an alleged Finnish  
bombardment of the Russian fron-  
tier village of Mainila, a few miles  
from Terijoki. As it happened, my  
friend, Herbert Elliston 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 bom-  
bardment. 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 fall 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 re-  
membered, was embodied in the  
declaration of the new Swedish  
Government—will be given to Fin-  
land.

I am inclined to think that, de-  
spite all risks and perils, 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 overmaster the  
government's prudence.