PATHFINDER

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Soviet "Madhouse"

Moscow residents who picked up newspapers last fortnight read stories about government plans for spring planting (nearly as big an item in agricultural Russia as national elections in the United States); about five girls skiing from Mongolia to Moscow; and about a group of young cyclists who had only 70 miles to go in a 20,000-mile tour around the edges of the Soviet. After the recent demonstration trial, all seemed to be well in the Russian world once more.

But two days later, Russia's ugliest word—"svoloch"—stared blackly from newspaper pages again. Translated by one correspondent into its Chinese equivalent, it simmered down to a weak-sounding, oriental horrible of horribles: "son of a tortoise egg." Applied to "Trotzkyist dogs," it meant that the Soviet meant to take up its party purge with grimmer vengeance.

Advice leaking out from the Kremlin had revealed what correspondents had long known or suspected—that hundreds of Russians were being held prisoners to be tried in further trials. While this was no surprise, the confirmed rumor did give Soviet editors another chance for exercising their vitriolic pens, and did make clear the fact that Josef Stalin will have a bigger all-star cast than ever for his next court circus.

Four important Bolsheviks are now being held: Nikolai Bukharin, former editor of the Moscow Izvestia; Alexis Rykoff, who was for a brief time premier after the death of Lenin, first Soviet dictator; Christian Rakoffsky, a former Ambassador to Great Britain; and Alexander Belabadoroff, who is alleged to have been one of the four who shot down Czar Nicholas II and his family in an Ekaterinburg cellar on July 16, 1918. Like previous de-

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fendants, all will probably be charged with conspiring against the Stalinist regime in Moscow.

While mass meetings were being held all over Russia to discuss these latest revelations, three London dailies published stories of doubtful authenticity. First, there had been an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate trial prosecutor Andrei Vishinsky. Second, the party purge had been widened to include the Soviet Secret Police itself, with 50 of its number being arrested. Third, and improbable, Stalin and Klementi Voroshiloff, his minister of war, were on the verge of an open break because the ambitious army commissar felt that he had been denied his proper influence in government policy.

In Mexico City, Leon Trotzky, allegedly the director of all Soviet conspiracies, telephoned to 6,000 persons gathered in New York by the Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotzky that he thought Soviet Russia had been turned into a "madhouse."