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*Mr. Roberts to Mr. Eden.—(Received 8th June.)*

(No. 358. Secret.)

*Moscow, 24th May, 1945.*

Sir,

THE approaching third anniversary of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty will follow very shortly upon the end of the war in Europe. It therefore seems an appropriate moment to review the reactions of the Soviet people and of the Soviet Government to the Allied victory and to the new situation in Europe and to consider how Anglo-Soviet relations and the Anglo-Soviet Treaty in particular are likely to be affected by them.

2. It would, I think, have been normal to expect the victory in Europe to be celebrated, here as in other Allied countries, as the fruit of joint efforts and as a cause of common rejoicing. We might reasonably have hoped that the main note sounded by the Soviet leaders at such a time would have been one of Allied unity to be carried forward from the war into the peace. After the unprecedented strain under which the Soviet population has been living for the past few years we might also have looked for some general relaxation in tension and some hint that the great and successful exertions of the Soviet people in war would find their reward in easier living conditions at home and in the promise of easier and more confident relations between the Soviet Union and the outside world. None of these expectations has, however, been realised.

3. The 9th May, Victory Day in Moscow, was, it is true, set aside as a public holiday and, as I reported in my telegram No. 1806, it was a day of popular rejoicing during which the contribution of the Soviet Union's Allies to the joint victory was not overlooked. Even on this day, however, the popular mood, to judge from accounts in the foreign press and on the wireless, was in no way comparable with the enthusiasm displayed in London and other victorious capitals. It is also noteworthy that Marshal Stalin, although present at the May Day parade and again for M. Shcherbakov's funeral on the 12th May, did not think it necessary to show himself to the people nor even to be in Moscow for the victory celebrations. Nor were the references to the Soviet Union's Allies allowed in any way to obscure the impression, so widely prevalent here, that the war had been won almost single-handed by the Red army. To the foreign observer, life in Moscow has changed very little since Victory Day. On the morrow of the victory, the atmosphere was one of work as usual, and there has since been no apparent slackening in the national effort, nor any sign of demobilisation, either military or industrial.

4. For four long, weary years of war the Soviet peoples have been led to believe that, in spite of powerful Allies, the U.S.S.R. has been bearing the overwhelming weight of the struggle against Hitlerite Germany and her satellites, and that if they fought and toiled on together in unity and selfless devotion they would ultimately smash the Fascist armies and save themselves and the rest of Europe and mankind from monstrous oppression and ruinous slavery. Their press has also dinned into them that the gigantic strains and stresses of the war have tested the Soviet Union more severely than any other country and have proved that it is the most stable, united, progressive and democratic State in the world; that it possesses a matchless army of unsurpassed might, skill and daring; that in the Soviet Socialist system it has developed the best possible form of organisation for mobilising the people for both war and peace; and that all progressive and freedom-loving peoples have come to regard it as the embodiment of their most cherished hopes and dreams. The result is that, now that Germany has surrendered unconditionally and the din of battle in Europe is stilled, they naturally regard their country as the principal architect of victory and saviour of civilisation and feel immensely proud of their military, economic and moral strength and supremely confident of their ability to heal the wounds of war and grapple successfully with the problems of the future. Academician Potemkin, writing in *Izvestiya* on the 23rd May, claimed that "The Russian people had stood tests that no State of the capitalistic world could have stood. The people

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