



"PRAVDA" Means "TRUTH"

by Robert A. Heinlein

*How can the attitudes of 200 million Soviets
be switched on-and-off like a light bulb?*

Photo by E. Demarest Peterson

"PRAVDA" means "truth."
That's what it says, right
here in my English-Russian
dictionary: Pravda — Truth.
Surely one may depend on the

dictionary.

In Al Smith's bleak, skeptical
words: "Let's take a look at the
record."

On May Day, 1960, a United
States U-2 reconnaissance plane

made some type of unplanned landing in the Soviet Union. This much is both "truth" and "pravda." Beyond this bare fact, "truth" and "pravda" diverge widely.

TRUTH: On May 1 this U-2 plane grounded near Sverdlovsk in the heartland of the Soviet Union about 1,500 miles from the border it crossed. The plane was wrecked but the pilot was not killed. Much of the equipment in the plane, such as radio gear, was undamaged. The pilot's survival and the condition of the wreckage, plus the undamaged equipment, suggest a forced landing in rough country, such as would result from engine failure.

The U-2 is extremely fast and it cruises at very high altitude, 60–70,000 feet. The kinetic energy stored in a moving object varies as the square of its velocity ($E = \frac{1}{2}MV^2$). A staggering amount of kinetic energy is stored in a U-2. If such a plane is hit by anti-aircraft rocket fire what happens in the next split second would make a head-on collision between two hot-rodders seem like a mother's loving pat. The anti-aircraft damage merely triggers the disaster; the major violence comes from the plane's great speed — it explodes! Suddenly the sky is filled with junk.

THE CHANCE of the pilot's surviving is small. He may escape if the plane's ejection capsule is not damaged when the plane is hit. But there is only the tiniest chance that radios and other relatively fragile pieces of equipment would reach the ground undamaged. Nevertheless, such items were "recovered" from the "shot-down" U-2. A crate of eggs, uncracked, would be equally convincing.

We may never know the exact truth of what happened to that U-2. Only Soviet officials talked to unlucky pilot Powers before his trial.

But the nervous nellies among us should stop beating their breasts over the shame of it all. Photo reconnaissance is not the same thing as a bombing run. An overflight by an unarmed plane is not in the same league with what Khrushchev did to Budapest. What we are dealing with here is the security of the United States and — very possibly — the survival, and certainly the freedom, of the entire human race.

Espionage is not illegal under International Law. Neither is it immoral. The penalty for getting caught at it is very high. Is usually means the spy's neck. It is not illegal under U.S. laws for us to attempt to

spy on the U.S.S.R., nor is it illegal under Soviet law for them to attempt to spy on us. Nor, in either case, is it an act of war. Throughout history every country has striven to learn the military secrets of any potential enemy, and to protect its own. Spying is wise and necessary insurance against utter military disaster.

That we have been conducting photo reconnaissance over the Soviet Union so successfully and for four vital years is the most encouraging news in the past decade. Among other things it means we have accurate maps by which to strike back. The Soviet Union does not have to send spy planes over us to obtain similar information. Excellent large-scale maps with our military installations and industrial complexes clearly marked may be obtained free from Standard Oil or Sonoco. Still better maps may be ordered by the Soviet Embassy from our Coast and Geodetic Survey at very low prices. Soviet agents move freely among us and many of them enjoy the immunity and complete freedom of travel afforded by U.N. passports. If a Red spy wants aerial color photographs at low altitude of our Air Defense installation just south of Kansas City — in

America's heartland — until recently he could hire a pilot and a plane at the Kansas City airport for about \$25 an hour and snap pictures to his heart's content without taking any of the risks of being hanged or shot down that Francis Powers took for us. If Mr. Eisenhower had failed to obtain by any possible means the military intelligence that the U.S.S.R. gets so easily and cheaply about us, he would have been derelict in his duty.

So, if you hear anyone whining about how "shameful" the U-2 flights were, take his lollipop away and spank him with it.

PRAVDA: It took the fat boy with the bad manners five days to decide just what sort of "pravda" to feed his people. The situation must have been acutely embarrassing for him, much more so than it was to us, because for four years he had been totally unable to stop the flights, despite his boasts and missile brandishing, despite the fact that every flight was certainly observed in Soviet radar screens.

K. could keep quiet, in which case there was little chance that the Free World news services would ever learn about it, and no chance that the Russian peo-

ple would ever find out. Our Central Intelligence Agency would know that a reconnaissance plane was missing, but it would not have advertised a top secret.

K. could refurbish the incident, give it a new paint job and peddle it as propaganda.

Or K. could tell the simple truth. This alternative is mentioned simply to keep the record technically complete, as the simple truth is a tactic not contemplated under Marxism-Leninism doctrines. Here we have the essential distinction between *truth* and *pravda*.

Truth, to the West, consists of all the facts without distortion.

Pravda is that which serves the World Communist Revolution. Pravda can be a mixture of fact and falsehood, or a flat-footed, brassbound, outright lie. In rare cases and by sheer coincidence, pravda may happen to match the true facts. I do not actually know of such a case but it seems statistically likely that such matching up must have taken place a few times in the past 43 years.

This comparison is not mere cynicism. I appeal to the authority of V. I. Lenin himself, in his tactics of revolution. By the doctrines of dialectical materialism, simple truth as we

know it is abolished as a concept. It can have no existence of its own separate from the needs and purposes of the Communist Party and the World Revolution. Our ingrained habit of believing that the other fellow must be telling the truth at least most of the time is perhaps our greatest weakness in dealing with the Kremlin.

APPARENTLY K. and his cohorts encountered much trouble in deciding just what the pravda should be about the U-2. They spent almost a week making up their minds. I was in Moscow at the time and there was no indication of any sort that anything unusual had happened on May 1. Russians continued to treat us American visitors with their customary, almost saccharine politeness and the daily paper (I hesitate to call it a newspaper) known as *Pravda* hinted not of U-2's. This situation continued for several days thereafter. I was not dependent on an Intourist guide-interpreter in reaching this impression as my wife reads, writes, understands and fluently speaks Russian. She's not of Russian descent. She learned it at a University of Colorado Extension night school, plus a private tutor and a lot of hard work.

After May Day, we went on out to Alma Ata in Kazakhstan, north of India and a very short distance from the Red China border, about 2,000 miles beyond Moscow. Be-Kind-To-Americans Week continued. Three Americans, the *only* travelers in that remote part of Asia, received the undivided attention of the Alma Ata Director of Intourist, two school teachers (pulled off their teaching jobs to act as guides), two chauffeurs, and most of the attention of the hotel staff. We had but to express a wish and it was granted.

As of Thursday morning, May 5, the pravda was still that nothing had happened.

Thursday afternoon the climate abruptly changed. K's cohorts had at last decided on a pravda; to wit: an American military plane had attempted to cross the border of the Soviet Union. Soviet rocket fire had shot it down from an altitude of 60,000 feet as soon as it had crossed the border. The Soviet peoples were very much distressed that America would even attempt such an act of bald aggression. The Soviet peoples wanted peace. Such aggression would not be tolerated. Any other such planes would not only be shot down but the bases from which the

attacks were made would be destroyed. Such was K's new pravda at the end of a five-hour speech.

THE ONLY CONNECTION between pravda and fact lay in the existence of an American plane down on Soviet soil. The locale of the incident shifted 1,500 miles. The plane is "shot down" at an extremely high altitude (if true then those exhibits in Gorky Park were as phony as K's promises of safety to Nagy and Pal Maleter). No mention at all is made of four long years of humiliating defeat. Pravda suppresses the truth and turns the incident into a triumph of Soviet arms. The Soviet newspapers and radio stations, all state-owned, spout the same line. All during this period the Voice of America was jammed. K. made certain his serfs heard nothing but the pravda.

WE LEARNED it by being ordered — not requested — to report to the Alma Ata office of the Director of Intourist. There we were given a long, very stern, but fatherly lecture on the aggressive misbehavior of our government, a lecture which included a careful recital of the U-2 pravda.

Once I understood, I did something no American should ever do in the Soviet Union. I lost my temper completely. I out-shouted the director on the subject of American grievances against the Soviet Union. My red-headed wife most ably supported me by scorching him about Soviet slave labor camps, naming each one by name, pointing out their location to him on the big map of the Soviet Union which hung back of his desk, and telling him how many people had died in them — including Americans.

We stomped out of his office, went to our room and gave way to the shakes. I had lost my temper and with it my judgment and thereby endangered not merely myself but my wife. I had forgotten that I was not protected by our Bill of Rights, that I was not free to bawl out a public official with impunity — that I was more than 2,000 miles from any possible help.

Communism has no concern for the individual. The Soviets have liquidated some 20 to 30 millions of their own in “building socialism.” They kept after Trotsky until they got him. They murdered a schoolmate of mine between stations on a train in Western Europe and dumped his body. Terror and

death are as fixed a part of their tactics as is distortion of the truth. Their present gang boss is the “liberator” of Budapest, the “pacifier” of the Ukraine — a comic butcher personally responsible for the deaths of millions of innocent people.

All this I knew. I knew, too, that our own policies had softened beyond recognition since the day when Teddy Roosevelt demanded the return of an American citizen alive — or the man who grabbed him, dead — and made his threat stick. In these present sorry days no American citizen abroad can count on protection from our State Department. We have even voluntarily surrendered our own soldier's Constitutional rights, drafted and sent willy-nilly to foreign lands. We still permit the Red Chinese to hold prisoner hundreds of our boys captured nearly ten years ago in Korea. We do nothing about it. I did have the cold comfort of knowing that I had behaved as a free man, an American. I cherished the thought. But I could not honestly pat myself on the back. My anger had been a reflex, not courage. Pride would not be much to chew on if it had got my wife and myself into a Soviet slave labor camp.

I BEGAN to listen for that knock on the door, the one you read about in *Darkness at Noon*, the knock that means your next address may be Vorkuta or Karaganda. The address doesn't matter. You are never, never going to receive mail.

My fears were not groundless. I'd read Philip Wylie's *The Innocent Ambassadors* and I knew what had happened to his brother. I vividly recalled Kravchenko's *I Chose Freedom*.

The knock never came because the political climate engendered by the new pravda was "more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger." The next morning, May 6, we were again ordered to report to the Director's office. We had decided to brazen it out. We refused to go. Presently, we were allowed to catch a plane for Tashkent.

Pravda lasted 12 days, until K. shattered the Summit and revealed a new pravda.

We arrived in Leningrad just as the news reached there that the Summit had failed and that President Eisenhower had cancelled his proposed trip to the USSR and that Khrushchev was returning to Moscow via East Berlin.

The climate suddenly turned very chilly.

A month earlier, in Moscow,

we had been picked up by two Russians the very first time we went out on the street. One was a technical translator; the other, a lady, was a museum curator. They were very friendly and stayed with us almost three hours, asking questions about the U.S. and inviting questions about the Soviet Union. This happened to us daily thereafter; we were always making casual acquaintance with Soviet citizens, on the street, in parks, in restaurants, during intermissions at the theatre, everywhere. They were always curious about America, very friendly and extremely polite. This attitude on the part of individual Soviet citizens toward individual Americans continued throughout the first pravda, ending May 6. It lessened slightly during the "more-in-sorrow" second pravda.

K's Paris news conference set up a new pravda. From the time we reached Leningrad until we left for Helsinki, Finland, not one Soviet citizen other than Intourist employees — who had to deal with us professionally — spoke to us under any circumstances. Not one.

I N DEALING with Intourist it is always difficult to tell

whether one's frustrations arise from horrendous red tape or from intentional obstructionism. In Leningrad it at once became clear that Intourist now just did not want to give service. Even the porter who took up our bags made trouble.

Our first afternoon we were scheduled to visit the Hermitage, one of the world's great art museums. The tour had been set with Intourist for that particular afternoon before we left the States.

At the appointed time our guide (you have to have one) had not arranged for a car. After awhile it whisked up and the guide said "Now we will visit the stadium."

We said that we wanted to visit the Hermitage, as scheduled. The guide told us that the Hermitage was closed. We asked to be taken to another museum (Leningrad has many). We explained that we were not interested in seeing another stadium.

We visited the stadium.

That is all Intourist permitted us to see that afternoon.

When we got back to the hotel we found someone in our room, as always in Leningrad. Since maid service in Intourist hotels varies from non-existent to very ubiquitous

we did not at once conclude that we were being intentionally inconvenienced. But one afternoon we found six men in our room, busy tearing out all the pipes and the question of intent became academic. A hotel room with its plumbing torn up and its floor littered with pipes and bits of wood and plaster is only slightly better than no hotel room at all.

We went to the ballet once in Leningrad. Intermissions are very long in Soviet theatres, about half an hour, and on earlier occasions these had been our most fruitful opportunity for meeting Russians.

Not now, not after K's Paris pravda. No one spoke to us. No Russian would even meet our eyes as we strolled past. The only personal attention we received that evening at the ballet was an unmistakably intentional elbow jab in the ribs from a Russian major in uniform. Be-Kind-To-Americans Week had adjourned, *sine die*.

HOW CAN the attitudes of 200 million people be switched on — and — off like a light bulb? How can one set of facts be made to produce three widely differing pravdas? By complete control of all communications from the cradle to the grave.

Almost all Soviet women work. Their babies are placed in kindergartens at an average age of 57 days, so we were told, and what we saw supported the allegation. We visited several kindergartens, on collective farms and in factories. By the posted schedules, these babies spend 13½ hours each day in kindergarten — they are with their mothers for perhaps an hour before bedtime.

At the Forty-Years-of-October Collective Farm outside Alma Ata some of the older children in one of the kindergartens put on a little show for us. One little girl recited a poem. A little boy gave a prose recitation. The entire group sang. The children were clean and neat, healthy and happy. Our guide translated nothing so, superficially, it was the sort of beguiling performance one sees any day in any American kindergarten.

However, my wife understands Russian:

The poem recounted the life of Lenin.

The prose recitation concerned the Seven-Year Plan.

The group singing was about how "we must protect our Revolution."

These tots were no older than six.

That is how it is done. Start-

ing at the cradle, never let them hear anything but the official version. Thus "pravda" becomes "truth" to the Russian child.

What does this sort of training mean to a person when he is old enough, presumably, to think for himself? We were waiting in the Kiev airport, May 14. The weather was foul, planes were late and some 30 foreigners were in the Intourist waiting room. One of them asked where we were going and my wife answered that we were flying to Vilno.

Vilno? Where is that? My wife answered that it was the capital of Lithuania, one of the formerly independent Baltic republics which the USSR took over 20 years ago — a simple historic truth, as indisputable as the fact of the Invasion of Normandy or the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

But the truth is not pravda.

A YOUNG Intourist guide present understood English, and she immediately interrupted my wife, flatly contradicted her and asserted that Lithuania had always been part of the Soviet Union.

The only result was noise and anger. There was no possibility of changing this young

woman's belief. She was telling the *pravda* the way she had been taught it in school and that was that. She had probably been about three when this international rape occurred. She had no personal memory of the period. She had never been to Vilno, although it is less than 400 miles from Kiev. (Soviet people do not travel much. With few exceptions the roads are terrible and the railroads scarce. Russians are required to use internal passports, secure internal visas for each city they visit and travel by Intourist, just like a foreigner. Thus, traveling for pleasure, other than to designated vacation spots on the Black Sea, is almost unheard of.)

In disputing the official *pravda* we were simply malicious liars and she made it clear that she so considered us.

About noon on Sunday, May 15 we were walking downhill through the park surrounding the castle which dominates Vilno. We encountered a group of six or eight Red Army cadets. Foreigners are a great curiosity in Vilno. Almost no tourists go there. So they stopped and we chatted, myself through our guide and my wife directly, in Russian.

Shortly one of the cadets

asked us what we thought of their new manned rocket? We answered that we had had no news lately — what was it and when did it happen? He told us, with the other cadets listening and agreeing, that the rocket had gone up that very day, and at that very moment a Russian astronaut was in orbit around the earth — and what did we think of *that*?

I congratulated them on this wondrous achievement but, privately, felt a dull sickness. The Soviet Union had beaten us to the punch again. But later that day our guide looked us up and carefully corrected the story: the cadet had been mistaken, the rocket was *not* manned.

That evening we tried to purchase *Pravda*. No copies were available in Vilno. Later we heard from other Americans that *Pravda* was not available in other cities in the USSR that evening — this part is heresy, of course. We tried also to listen to the Voice of America. It was jammed. We listened to some Soviet stations but heard no mention of the rocket.

This is the rocket the Soviets tried to recover and later admitted that they had had some trouble with the retrojets; they had fired while the rocket was in the wrong attitude.

SO WHAT is the answer? Did that rocket contain only a dummy, as the pravda now claims? Or is there a dead Russian revolving in space? — an Orwellian "unperson," once it was realized he could not be recovered.

I am sure of this: at noon on May 15 a group of Red Army cadets were unanimously positive that the rocket was manned. That pravda did not change until later that afternoon.

Concerning unpersons —

Rasputin is a fairly well known name in America. I was unable to find anyone in Russia who would admit to having heard of him. He's an unperson.

John Paul Jones is known to every school child in America. After the American Revolution Catherine the Great called him to Russia where he served as an Admiral and helped found the Russian Navy, negligible up to that time. I tried many, many times to find a picture of him in Russian historical museums and I asked dozens of educated Russians about him — with no results. In Russian history John Paul Jones has become an unperson.

Trotsky and Kerensky are not unpersons yet. Too many persons are still alive who re-

call their leading roles in recent Russian history. But they will someday be unpersons, even though Dr. Kerensky is living today in California. In the USSR it is always tacitly assumed that the Communists overthrew the Tsar. This leaves no room for Dr. Kerensky. If pinned down, a Soviet guide may admit that there was such a person as Kerensky, then change the subject. The same applies to Trotsky; his role, for good or bad, is being erased from the record. We saw literally thousands of pictures of Lenin, including several hundred group pictures which supposedly portrayed all the Communist VIP's at the time of the Revolution. Not one of these pictures shows Trotsky *even though many of them were alleged to be news photos taken at the time when Lenin and Trotsky were still partners and buddies.*

This is how unpersons are made. This is how pravda is created.

The theme of the May Day celebration this year was "Miru Mir": "Peace to the World." A sweet sentiment. But it isn't safe to assume that the dictionary definition of peace has any connection with the official Communist meaning, since even yesterday's pravda may be reversed tomorrow.



RUSSIAN STUDENTS: the girls in chocolate-brown uniforms with capes—worn in Czarist Russia, too—the boy with a red pioneer kerchief, study English grammar at Moscow's Public School Number 56.—Photo By E. Demarest Peterson.

—Photo by E. Demarest Peterson

MERCURY RESUMES EARTHQUAKE FORECASTS IN NOVEMBER

Everything in life is electrical in nature, states modern science. Readers will recall the Hasbrouck forecasts MERCURY published earlier this year which time field-force disturbances and predict—with 90 per cent accuracy—coincident observable phenomena: earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and radio black-outs. Next month the Hasbroucks will examine the recent Chilean disaster.

The conspirators "arranged" to have the Paris summit meeting blow up so that their African revolution could take place first.

1960:

A YEAR

FOR THE

PIGEONS



by Waldon Porterfield



THIS YEAR, happy headlines around the world beat a crazy bird beat.

Not pigeon pie but pie-eyed pigeons puzzled Chicago's Animal Welfare League until it discovered that the tipping birds had been drinking antifreeze drained from cars.

In St. Louis, the city health commissioner, Dr. J. Earl Smith, announced a plan to rid the community of unwanted pigeons. Dr. Smith decided to sneak the birds grain soaked in alcohol; then, after they passed out, send them to the city dog pound gas chamber. Stewing bird lovers from across the nation denounced pigeon pickler Smith. A Vermonter wrote: "A trusting pigeon has no chance over the treacherous human." But a gourmet suggested: "Get them tipsy on rum. It makes them tenderer."

In Pawtucket, R.I., an 11-year-old canary called Babe came down with the flu. His keeper, a Mrs. Jenny Peacock, gave him a peck of bourbon with an eye dropper. "Babe likes bourbon," Mrs. Peacock told a reporter. "Perks her right