

## Farewell to Russia

There are those who prefer to think that Alexandra was never married to Quisling. A couple of frequently heard arguments for this position are that a trade legation does not have the right to perform marriages and that, in any event, such a legation could not have issued her a passport.

In the first place, she and Quisling already had the Russian papers proving that they were man and wife when they showed up at the Norwegian Trade Legation in Moscow, and as far as the issuing of a passport is concerned, these facts should be noted:

From September 2, 1921, Norway and Russia had had a mutual trade agreement allowing both countries to maintain trade legations in each other's countries. When this agreement was broadened and ratified on December 15, 1925, Article 1 specified that the *already existing consular positions* would continue. Already in the summer of 1922, F. Jakhelln's official title was "The Royal Norwegian Government's Empowered Representative in Russia."<sup>1</sup>

1. "Handels- og Sjøfartstraktat mellom Norge og De Socialistiske Sovjetrepublikkers Forbund, 15. desbr. 1925." With thanks to Gunvor Pershus and Kjetil Reithaug in the Norwegian Department of Foreign Affairs for providing a copy of the 1925 treaty. See also NB, Nansen Archive, Ms. fol. 1988, R<sub>1</sub>A (letter from Jakhelln, June 22, 1922).

Great Britain's *de jure* recognition of the Soviet Union did not occur until February 1924, but it had had a trade agreement with the Soviet Union since March 16, 1921—in other words, half a year before Norway signed its first such agreement. Paragraph 8 of this first English treaty, which presumably followed a fairly standard pattern, states:<sup>2</sup>

Passports, documents of identity, Powers of Attorney and similar documents issued or certified by the competent authorities in either country for the purpose of establishing trade to be carried out in pursuance of this Agreement shall be treated in the other country as if they were issued or certified by the authorities of a recognized foreign Government.

There is also confirmation of Alexandra's story about the reception at the Norwegian Legation and about her civil marriage to Quisling in Kharkov in August 1922, which entitled her, among other things, to a Norwegian passport, and which caused Quisling to enter her in the military rolls as his wife immediately upon his return to Oslo.<sup>3</sup> At the end of January/beginning of February 1930, Consul L. Grønvold at the Norwegian Consulate in Shanghai remembered that he had been present in Moscow during the reception there for Alexandra and Vidkun in August 1922.<sup>4</sup> After arriving home in Oslo in 1922, "Mr. and Mrs. V. Quisling" received a Christmas greeting from Nansen's close associate Edouard Frick, who evidently was fully informed that Quisling now was living at Erling Skjalgssonsgate 26 as a married man.<sup>5</sup> This is also the appropriate point to introduce a Russian

2. William Peyton Coates and Zelda Coates, *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations*, London, 1943, vol. II, pp. 129, 755.

3. Vogt, *Mennesket Vidkun*, s. 74.

4. RA, Arkiv fra Nedre Slottsgate 3. Consul Grønvold's card is enclosed with a letter that Alexandra wrote to Quisling from Shanghai on February 4, 1930.

5. NB, Quisling Archive, Ms. fol. 3920: XII: 4.

woman just a couple of years older than Alexandra, who will turn up later in this book as well. She gave me her permission to use the information she provided,<sup>6</sup> on condition of anonymity—not an unknown phenomenon among Russian refugees in the U.S.

I interviewed L.T. in 1983 after learning that she worked for the package division at Kharkhov's PomGol in 1922–23. As always, when I wanted to check archives and other sources for the sake of my own satisfaction, Alexandra encouraged contact with L.T. as an eyewitness to this period of her life. Little did she suspect that the tale would contain such admiration for Quisling (who had so distinguished himself during his relief work in the Ukraine that L.T. refused to believe anything bad about him) and so much vitriolic gossip about herself. Alexandra nevertheless accepted L.T.'s statements quite calmly, for while these gave a much distorted version of her personal experiences, they confirmed the chief points of her memoirs and also let her know, at long last, who had instigated much of the gossip about her, both when she and Vidkun married and upon their return the following year.

L.T. made it quite clear that, although she knew very well who Quisling was, she had never met Alexandra; therefore, anything she said about her was necessarily based on rumors and gossip. Those familiar with Lannung's description of the young Alexandra will also recognize many of the ingredients in L.T.'s story because they had several sources in common. There is, however, an important difference between Lannung and L.T. The latter stated her sources and did not pretend that everything she said came from personal observation.

L.T. confirmed that Alexandra had worked downstairs on the first floor. Her own job had been on the second floor, where ARA also had its parcel distribution center, and she was proud of the

6. Telephone interview on March 29, 1983.

fact that she and her co-workers had absolutely no contact with the people working in the downstairs offices. That was because they had been told that those on the first floor were part of the KGB, the Soviet security police, so that fraternizing with them would be both dangerous and tainting. (The reader will remember that Alexandra also noted the lack of contact between the personnel on the first and second floors.) L.T. therefore assumed that Alexandra, as well, worked for the KGB, especially since she ran the telephone exchange through which Captain Quisling and all the other foreign relief workers had to make their calls, and which would have been easy to monitor. Another reason L.T. believed the derogatory stories she heard about Alexandra was that Alexandra—observed from an upstairs window—looked so different from the other girls. Too angelic, in fact!

Despite her striking looks, Alexandra does not appear to have been an object of interest on the second floor until Quisling took notice of her very shortly after his arrival in Kharkov, when rumors designed to show her as an irresponsible flirt provided welcome relief from the tedium in the package division. A willing team consisting of Quisling's handyman, his cook (whom Alexandra will describe more closely in a later chapter) and "a lively little fellow named Leo Granovsky" made sure that these rumors about "that little blonde downstairs" reached the ears of Quisling's secretary, who, aside from being head-over-heels in love with Quisling, was also a friend of L.T.'s

We have already encountered Lyóva (Leo) Granovsky in an earlier chapter, when he introduced Alexandra to the ailing poet Khlebnikov. From Quisling's own correspondence, it appears that upon arriving in Kharkov in February 1922, he had engaged Lyóva Granovsky to work for him, selecting him from a very small pool of "available" workers.<sup>7</sup> He did not know that, accord-

7. NB, Nansen Archive, Ms. fol. 1988, RU<sub>3</sub>B and RU<sub>6</sub>A.

ing to L.T., the local Soviet authorities already had given Granovsky orders to keep track of Quisling and to report back to them about everything he did; and it never aroused Alexandra's suspicion that Lyóva so often could be seen inside and outside of the PomGol building because she had long been accustomed to seeing him turn up in a variety of places. According to L.T., Granovsky even came along when Quisling went out in the kitchen to give an order to his cook! When Quisling set out for his evening walk, Granovsky would often walk beside him or tail him furtively, always struggling to keep up with the Captain's long strides; L.T. often saw them walk past her home. She did not say how Granovsky's surveillance fared during all the hours he evidently spent gossiping on the second floor.

There will be more of L.T.'s recollections later. Here, it needs noting only that she remembered when Alexandra and the Captain registered their marriage with the Russian authorities, shortly before they separately left Kharkov for Moscow. Together with her lovelorn friend, Quisling's secretary, who had guessed what was happening, L.T. stood and watched the couple from the upstairs window.

Alexandra will now tell her own story of what happened after her reunion with Quisling in Moscow:

A day or two after I became a Norwegian citizen, we were ready to leave Moscow for Petrograd. Packing my little hatbox did not take long, and Vidkun's splendid leather suitcases were also ready before long. Compared with the elegance of these suitcases, my poor yellow hatbox was clearly out of place, and Vidkun was obviously embarrassed. Both on the morning of our departure and several times during the journey, he cast a troubled look at this eyesore and said:

"As soon as we're abroad, I'll buy you some first-rate suitcases and a wardrobe trunk you can hang your dresses in."

That certainly sounded wonderful. Then he would invariably add: "Since we're not rich, everything we buy has to be of the best possible quality—strong and beautiful things that will last us for the rest of our lives."

I was to learn that, while his personal habits were quite ascetic, he enjoyed possessing beautiful things, as well as dressing and living well. All told, he wished to look like a distinguished and civilized man of the world and, to him, expensive objects represented the worldly success and recognition he coveted.

On the morning of our departure, I also had my first practical demonstration of Vidkun's cautious habits and methodical ways. He brought out his sewing kit, and together we fashioned a *lá-danka*, or small cloth bag, for me to wear on a ribbon around my neck, where thieves could not snatch it. When we had put my engagement ring and some money in the bag, we divided the rest of Vidkun's foreign currency and hid portions of it in our many pieces of luggage in order to ensure that we would always have some money even if we were robbed or had some of our luggage stolen. I had no reason to question the origin of this money or Vidkun's motives for hiding it in our luggage. He had, on several occasions, told me that his work for Nansen, besides giving him fame and moral satisfaction, had also provided him with a very good income, several times more than his pay as a General Staff officer or as the Norwegian military attaché to a great power.<sup>8</sup>

Before the Revolution, I had taken many trips on the express train to and from Sebastopol, known for its speed and luxury. There were still traces of this luxury both aboard the train and

8. While working for Nansen, Quisling was to receive £60 per month plus expenses. For the journey to Russia in February 1922, he received an advance of Nkr. 800 and £50. However, he was not paid his salary until early in 1923 for the seven months his assignment lasted—£440. NB, Nansen Archive, Ms. fol. 1988, RUO<sub>1</sub> (letter from Nansen to Gorvin, January 19, 1922; telegram from Nansen to Frick, January 3, 1923).

at the Moscow and Petrograd stations. Even the porters (“White Aprons”) who handled Vidkun’s many heavy suitcases were polite and efficient.

We had our own first-class compartment with comfortable beds, and there was a dining car on the train. I was very much looking forward to our first journey together and to seeing Petrograd for the first time. As luck would have it, however, my health took a turn for the worse and dampened my enjoyment. Pains in my stomach came and went, accompanied by nausea and exhausting chills, and I ached all over. I struggled to be a good travel companion and not to show how miserable I felt, but there were times when I wanted only to be left alone in a warm bed in a quiet place. Instead, I was confined to a tiny room which I had to share with a man who was my husband, but who, in many ways, was still a stranger and who did not leave me alone for a minute. I put off using the tiny lavatory because it was not sound-proof and I was very bashful. Besides, it had a door opening into the neighboring compartment. I felt that I had no privacy at all, and the restraints dictated by these circumstances obviously did not improve my condition.

At times, when my pain was so strong that I was unable to conceal it from Vidkun, he tried to help me in his own manner. Instead of suggesting that I lie down with a hot water bottle or some medication, he assured me that most of our illnesses and problems are imaginary, and that we can cure ourselves through self-hypnosis. He explained that if I would repeat to myself the phrase: “Every day in every way, I feel better and better,” I would feel fine in no time—*bezotlagatel’no*. Alas, Émile Coué’s auto-suggestion system did not prove very effective against my pain.

Since it had been a long time since Vidkun and I had been together undisturbed for more than a short period, he decided that we ought to use this opportunity to resume our long conversations. This time, we would tell each other about our families

and backgrounds, instead of exchanging views on general and less personal subjects.

He described his family and its history in detail, but concerning me and mine his questions touched only on superficial matters, such as my school, my friends, and what I did with my spare time—never on Mama and Papa and their families. At the start of this long conversation, I was really touched that Vidkun evidently wanted to get closer to me through an exchange of information about our families and our hopes for the future, and I came close to spilling the secret of my mother's maiden name and much else besides. But when I realized that he deliberately avoided everything that had to do with my parents, I was so hurt that I no longer felt tempted to break the promise I had given Mama or to tell anything about our life. I resisted the thought that, perhaps, he did not want to hear about these things because he was determined to separate me from everything that had to do with the past. Maybe he was even afraid that he might have to assume responsibility for Mama.

As quickly as I could, I pushed these depressing thoughts aside in order to listen to what Vidkun was telling me. He was very well read and had an encyclopedic memory, able to store fascinating bits of information on innumerable topics. He loved to display his erudition, and I earnestly wanted to learn as much as possible about my husband's native land, so I kept asking questions. From our earlier talks, I knew that Vidkun was passionately fond of the Norwegian countryside and knew the length and breadth of it from his many long hikes. Now, he vividly described his lonely mountain wanderings from fjord to fjord, in summer and winter, while he was tempering his body and his will.

He also reverted to the story of his early, driving ambition to excel at everything he did, and to his pet theme of how *anyone* capable of sufficient self-restraint, patience, and determination can reach any goal he wishes.

“But!” he added with a stern look, “though you can always rely on yourself, you are often also obliged to depend on others. And when these others are not strong enough, or wise enough, or loyal enough, then your plans and even your life may be in mortal danger! Therefore, one cannot be too careful when choosing friends and associates. Loyalty and dependability are the chief human virtues!”

A shadow of pain flickered across his face, which was already serious to begin with. His lower lip went up, and he looked oddly like a hurt little boy. “I have already told you that I once made the great mistake of loving and trusting a girl who later proved unworthy of my trust. It was a hard way to learn my lesson, but now I know how to find faithful friends and associates. For that, none are better than the loving and loyal members of one’s own dear family. I want you to belong to our family and be one of us.”

And while our train carried us ever farther away from the life I knew, Vidkun began another long saga about his family and its achievements. I realize now, of course, that Vidkun romanticized and exaggerated about his family, just as he did in all matters that concerned himself, but it was certainly obvious that he was at least as fond of his family as of his country. I already knew that his father was a parson in a small town in Telemark, a rather remote place. He now told me proudly about his remote ancestor, a Marquis Quisling, and he also mentioned that his father was related to Ibsen. Vidkun’s mother, Anna Bang, was related to both Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and the composer Rikard Nordraak, who had written the melody to the national anthem, Vidkun said; besides, she was a descendant of the famous Hvide family, which counted Archbishop Absalon, the founder of Copenhagen, among its members. This was also a topic he often reverted to later, as if to make sure I knew all the details. How correct they were, I had no way of knowing.

He spoke with great affection about his parents and his two younger brothers, who meant a great deal to him. It was also clear to me that he had felt very close to his sister, Esther, four years his junior, who had died while still a young girl. Even so, I got the impression that Vidkun's childhood had been both lonely and difficult in the midst of this close-knit family. There also seemed to be an unusually strong competitive spirit among the members of the family, an outsized ambition to shine by doing something great. Nor could Vidkun relax at school. On the contrary, there he had to work even harder because the standard Norwegian in which all the subjects were taught was so different from the local dialect he spoke that it had been the equivalent of having to acquire a new language, he said. In addition, he was very shy.

Vidkun wanted me to understand that he had overcome these difficulties because he was very intelligent, thirsty for knowledge, and determined to outshine everybody. Everything he did had to be perfect. He reached his goal, but that obviously did not make him any more popular among his classmates because people usually do not like ambitious overachievers. I was soon to learn first-hand how mercilessly Vidkun's ambitions drove him. Perhaps neither his talents nor his intellect were as great as he himself believed, but I do know that he had an excellent memory, great powers of concentration, and a devilish capacity for work that enabled him to go beyond normal human endurance.

His tale was accompanied by the rhythmic noises of the rushing train—sounds that are always so exciting and that now seemed to be pushing me steadily closer to the life he was describing. Occasionally, his story was interrupted by the locomotives' long and plaintive wails, crying out to me about my separation from everything and everyone I had ever known and loved. Those wails spoke to me in Russian, for in no other language could I express the meaning and emotion of those poignant Russian words: *ródina*, *razlúka*, *toská*—motherland, parting, homesickness—or *ra-*

*zlúka navsegdá*—separation forever. And then the heart-piercing farewell used when someone departs from this world: *proschái*, which literally means “keep forgiving me.” Oh, please do not think ill of me, all of you whom I had to leave behind—*ne pomínáite líkhom* . . .

Even if I had wanted to, I could not have jumped off the train and gone home to my mother. Not only was I too ill and poor and proud, but it also was the wings of Fate that were carrying me away, and I longed to know what my future held.

As our train rolled toward the unknown North, my headache and illness gradually turned my dreamlike state into a nightmare. Meanwhile, Vidkun continued to extol his principles concerning hard work, persistence, and ambition, all of which I already knew well from my many years of hard work as a ballet student. After his pet sermon on how to gain mastery over both one’s life and one’s destiny, he returned—as he did countless times later—to the subject of fidelity and loyalty in general and marital faithfulness in particular. He never referred directly to our marriage, but he never left me with any doubt as to what he had in mind.

“You must know and remember,” he said this time, “that I have immense willpower. I can renounce anything, abstain from everything. But I can never surrender or lose you. Marriages are made in Heaven, and no matter what happens, divorce is out of the question. It is a cardinal sin. Even if one partner becomes old and ugly and sick, or makes a mistake, or gets into trouble, the other partner has to remain loyal and faithful for better or for worse. Loyalty and fidelity are one’s sacred duty to the end of one’s days.”

When we arrived in Petrograd, we stayed at the Hotel Europe or the Metropole—I cannot remember which. It was very much like the Savoy Hotel in Moscow, with the same huge, dark rooms and the same décor, but at least this time we had our own bathroom, the most remarkable feature of which was an immense

bath tub that could not be filled because it lacked a stopper. I tried to keep the tub plugged with my heel, which unfortunately did not suffice. In the end, I succeeded in taking a bath by kneeling down in front of the faucet and scooping the slowly flowing water over my body with my hands. I did not mind these small inconveniences, but they put Vidkun in a foul mood, and he wanted to leave as soon as possible.

Before we could leave, however, Vidkun had to take care of some private business. This happened in every city we came to, but he never said what sort of business it was. I thought it quite reasonable that he wanted to spend our brief sojourn in Petrograd talking with people he had known during his time as the Norwegian military attaché in Russia. Before he started his work for Nansen, he had been closely acquainted for at least three years with Soviet Russia and knew quite a bit about the many upheavals brought on by the 1917 Revolution. But these, too, were matters about which he said very little to me, despite my many eager questions both in Petrograd and later. Only occasionally did he proudly mention some of the prominent political figures he had met, such as Trotsky.

While Vidkun was busy elsewhere, I ventured out for a few short walks around town by myself. Walking along a street close to our hotel, I suddenly found myself on the embankment of the unbelievably wide and beautiful Neva, whose quiet force was enhanced by the majestic, granite-lined shores reflected in the transparent water. To me it seemed as if the river bottom had been paved with the same titanic slabs of rock as the edges, turning the river into a gigantic canal with many splendid ships lying at anchor. On the distant opposite shore were the misty outlines of palaces, towers, and spires—the wilderness tamed, a fairy tale vision of miraculously subjugated elements. Even the heavy layer of neglect and desolation brought on by years of war and revo-

lution could not conceal the past grandeur and splendor of the Russian Empire.

Fortunately, Vidkun found the time to go with me to see a few of the city's landmarks. The Saint Isaac Cathedral was a worthy rival to Saint Peter's and Saint Paul's, and the statue of the Bronze Horseman seemed to me to embody the genius of both Falconet and Pushkin to perfection. We also went out to a few of the best restaurants. But most of my time in Petrograd I spent quietly in our hotel room, and by the time we left for Finland, I felt rested and considerably better.

Just a couple of hours after leaving Petrograd, our train stopped at the Finnish border, seemingly out in the middle of nowhere. There were no civilians in sight, only Red Army soldiers and frontier guards. The few passengers on the train besides ourselves were all foreigners. Everybody's luggage was quickly taken off the train, and our suitcases—including my hideous yellow hat-box—were taken into a crudely constructed shed and placed on long, low wooden tables. Men in long, dirty trench coats politely ordered the passengers to open their luggage, the contents of which they examined minutely. Our own luggage was not examined, however, evidently because of Vidkun's diplomatic passport. He replied in the negative to the question of whether we had anything to declare. Then we all returned to our carriages, and our luggage was returned to the train, as well.

As soon as our train had crossed the border, it stopped again, and our luggage was taken off a second time. But at this customs house the procedure was much simpler. A few well-groomed Finnish customs inspectors in smart uniforms just walked through the length of the train and asked the passengers if they had anything to declare. Nobody's hand luggage was searched, and people were not made to turn their pockets inside out.

The previous few years of my life had been such a nightmare that it had sometimes been difficult to distinguish dream from

reality. You knew you were trapped, and to preserve your sanity you accepted your complete inability to change the situation. Imagine, then, the bliss of suddenly waking up and finding that everything was wonderful, exactly as I remembered it from my childhood!

The straight, clean paths around the Finnish railway station were covered with yellow sand, just as I recalled having seen at home in earlier times. Well-tended flower beds lined the paths, there were flowers in the customs house window boxes, and the whole world was so full of joy that the sun seemed to have broken through the clouds, although the weather in Finland was just the same as at that last dirty and gloomy Russian railway station, where the sky had resembled water covered with black oil. Now, everything was, with one stroke, clean and clear and smelling of pine forest.

I was so happy that I do not recall a greater happiness either before or since in my life. And I remember thinking at that moment: "Dear Lord, how I do love Vidkun! Isn't he wonderful!" He seemed to me as life-giving as sunshine, the very source of warmth, joy, and security. I had left darkness and trouble behind forever. From that moment, and for a long time to come, I remained convinced that, to the end of our lives, we would jointly overcome all obstacles in our way.

Vidkun decided that we should spend the night at a small resort near the border rather than go straight on to Helsinki. In my memory, the hotel at which we stayed—a large house belonging to a well-to-do family—remains the symbol of my new life's prosperity, stability, and permanence. To me, it seemed as if everything had been prepared for the express purpose of welcoming me into my new existence.

Our bedroom was paneled in deep golden Karelian birch, which made the room a little dark, but the furniture covered in a lovely flowery English chintz repeated the colors of the flowers

on the window sill. Our comfortable beds were heaped with down covers and many soft down pillows, and there were handsome rugs on the floor. Downstairs, the large hall used as a sitting room exuded the same sunny prosperity as our bedroom. The hall was dominated by a large fireplace, and the birch-paneled walls had shelves below the ceiling displaying an impressive collection of beer mugs. There was also a large, standing buffet with an array of dishes such as I had never seen. It was a *smörgåsbord* of sliced bread piled high with good things: salads, hams, omelets, herring dishes, and cheeses of every description. Everything tasted as wonderful as it looked; I felt as if I could not stop.

Watching me, Vidkun laughingly urged me to eat more: "You haven't tasted this; you ought to try these as well!" He obviously felt as happy as I, sitting there like a magician who had brought me into his enchanted world.

Traveling with Vidkun, I soon learned to appreciate the pleasure of eating in good restaurants. But after a while I began to worry about the cost, and on entering a restaurant I was apt to start thinking of what would happen if Vidkun ran out of money. Finally, I was unable to contain my worry. On a couple of occasions, I asked Vidkun:

"Have you got enough money with you? Have you checked to see that you have your wallet?"

He would look at me in surprise, but would keep talking about something else, as if he had not heard me. Finally, when a waiter once brought an exceptionally long bill, my heart descended toward my knees, and I simply had to ask:

"Are you really sure we have enough money to pay for all that?"

He looked into my eyes with a very serious expression. "Why are you so worried? Yes, of course it's possible that we haven't got enough money. Actually, I'm sure I don't have enough cash to pay this bill. But I have my gold watch."

Taking his gold watch out of his pocket, he continued gravely and with his eyes fastened on mine: "Well, I'm going to place this watch on the waiter's plate instead of money. He'll be able to figure it out. In any case, that gold watch should be worth more than the price of our lunch."

On the very rare occasions when Vidkun allowed himself a joke of this kind, there was never so much as a trace of a smile on his face, and it was impossible for me to tell whether he was serious or not. And now I was thoroughly frightened. What a disgrace it would be, in that elegant place, to have to pay for our meal with Vidkun's watch! When I finally realized that he was merely teasing me, my relief was immense, and the watch incident became a private joke between us. At every opportunity, even if we had guests along, Vidkun would find a moment to show me his watch and with a silent smile reassure me that there was no reason to fear that we could not meet the bill.

On this first day in Finland, however, I must admit that such worries were very far from my mind.

Early the following morning, we took the train to Helsinki and went directly to a hotel. We spent our time there chiefly in conversation, so I did not see much of that city. I had not yet recovered from my illness, although for a while I was feeling much better. But I noticed that the whites of my eyes had turned yellow, and I hinted that it might be wise to consult a doctor. Vidkun did not seem particularly concerned, however, but said, as was his wont:

"Never mind; you're so young; you'll get over it. It's just a reaction to all the big changes in your life—you're just nervous and tired from all the traveling. As soon as you've rested, you'll be all right again."

I thought, perhaps, that he was afraid that something might interrupt our journey or delay the church wedding he had planned. He kept reassuring me:

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“Wait until we get to Riga. I have several friends there, and one of them—a colleague of mine when I was the military attaché in Russia—is married to a very nice Russian lady. They are old and good friends of mine, and you’ll enjoy getting to know her. They can help us arrange the church wedding. From here to Riga is an easy trip.”

I agreed to everything without demur. Although I had taken responsibility for granted in my old life, I was not yet accustomed to being consulted by other adults and to sharing decision-making with them. Besides, for some reason that I don’t fully understand even now, in Vidkun’s presence I always felt powerless, without a will or opinion of my own.

And so our journey continued. In Estonia, we stopped briefly in Revel (now Tallinn), but I had a fever and remember very little from that city other than that it was exceptionally cold for the time of year. By the time we arrived in Riga, I felt a little better, however, and I noted with pleasure how everything there reminded me of a typical Russian city before the Revolution. Almost everyone spoke Russian, and in the street I saw boys and girls dressed in the same kind of school uniforms we had formerly used in Russia. Life in Riga seemed reassuringly patriarchal and inexpensive, and it struck me that this might have been a good place for Mama to stay, had I been able to bring her along.

The White Russian newspapers and magazines in Riga, both those published locally and those that came in from Berlin, made a powerful impression on me. Without fear of reprisals, they freely expressed their criticism of the Soviet government, and for the first time I was able to read about the fate of Russians who had escaped and lived abroad since 1917, and who included relatives of mine and good friends of my family’s. I was also eager for news about Kharkov and the Ukraine, but it turned out that I knew more than the newspapers about the conditions there

since I had left so recently. At least the papers were fairly accurate in their descriptions of the famine and the general conditions.

The first thing we did in Riga was to visit Vidkun's friend with the Russian wife, who urged us to stay with them. As far as I recall, Vidkun declined their invitation and took a room for us at a hotel, but we nevertheless spent much of our time in Riga with this hospitable couple. I do not recall their names now, so I will refer to them as the X family. On the day of our arrival, they invited us to lunch at their house, and whether it was because the notice had been too short or their cook was hopelessly incompetent, the meal was memorably awful. The main course was chicken so tough that it resisted my every effort with knife and fork, until it suddenly took to the air and landed at the other end of the table. Thus was born the first anecdote of Vidkun's and my married life; it served us well on numerous later occasions when a silly story was needed.

The small, dark, and fidgety Mrs. X took me under her wing and darted around to make our church wedding as traditional and ceremonious as possible, despite Vidkun's desire for a private affair. Her efforts were aided by the fact that it was hard to keep the news of Vidkun's marriage from the many people of various nationalities in Riga who knew him well. A good many of them were there because much of the world's diplomatic and trade negotiations with the Soviet authorities was conducted in Riga at that time, as the United States and the great majority of the other western nations refused to recognize the Soviet government.

While we were in Riga, Vidkun had to meet with members of the Latvian delegation to the League of Nations who would present his latest report on famine relief in Russia at the next assembly of the League. He spent much of his time in conferences with these people and with various government officials, while I was left to the care of the kind Mrs. X. She took me sightseeing

and shopping and even to a hairdresser's to make me look presentable on my big day.

I imagine every young woman looks forward to her wedding and wants it to be a solemn and memorable occasion. In my case, it was to be a hurried wedding, celebrated among total strangers in a foreign city, far from Mama and all my own friends. Without wanting to, I found myself thinking of how sad it was to miss the splendor of a full Orthodox wedding ceremony, which resembles a royal coronation. In addition, I was homesick and depressed because I had heard nothing from Mama since I'd left Kharkov. I had hesitated to write to anyone since crossing the Russian border, for fear of compromising my correspondents in the eyes of the Soviet authorities.

As the time for our wedding approached, I tried to push all sad thoughts aside. The flowers were delivered, and we left for the Lutheran church, where Vidkun and I exchanged rings and vows in a very brief and simple ceremony that nevertheless impressed me deeply. Three or four of Vidkun's friends bravely added some pomp to the occasion by dressing in their various military uniforms and forming an arch with their swords above our heads as we left the church. Then we left for our reception, where we cut our wedding cake and toasted all those who had come to wish us well.

I was exhausted by all the hustle and bustle of the last several days and, therefore, have only a dim memory of what followed. Also, my illness had flared up again, and I was in a fever daze when I left Riga and the shores of the former Russian Empire. But in the midst of that daze I knew that the man by my side was now in every way my husband.