

get area, since a small country would hesitate over making a protest to a large country in any event.

That any political motivation lies behind the "Russian hail" is most unlikely. This somehow makes the phenomenon, if it is actually a weapon of war, more terrifying. It has an impersonal, emotionless quality that disregards human values which have been painfully built up through the centuries.

It resembled the actions of the Soviets in the fall of 1939, when thousands of Poles fled into Russia to escape from the Nazis. Many of them were professional men and intellectuals with their families. They were put in forest camps in the dead of winter with pitifully inadequate clothing and food, and they died in an average of three weeks. There was no special hostility toward these people, but there was no place for them to go and in the camps they contributed little work before they died.

62

BEARING ON the mystery of the flying bombs is a misunderstanding as to what happened on the island of Peenemunde, which was one of the chief centers for German experiments with rockets. In this column, in the *Reader's Digest* and elsewhere in the United States, it has been widely printed on what seemed good information that installations at Peenemunde were destroyed by bombing attacks. That is not true. The United States strategic bombing survey determined that very little damage was done at Peenemunde.

From other sources I have learned that the Russians took Peenemunde almost intact. They also captured a number of German scientists who were active in promoting guided missile and rocket research.

The United States got its share of these scientists, many of whom are now in America. But the Soviets also shared in this strange spoil of war and their captured scientists are now said to be working for them. These experts may be teaching the Russians what they know and that may be the explanation for the mysterious fireworks.

Psychologists do not, of course, discount the remarkable suggestibility of the human mind in periods of great stress. Before the rise of Nazism, with its sinister accompaniment of mass hypnosis, we liked to think we were living in an age of reason and could not be touched by spells and hysteria that formerly swept whole populations. In the year 1000 large numbers of Europeans became convinced that the world was ending and strange forms of mass hysteria occurred throughout the Continent.

Perhaps the "Russian hail" was only a stray meteor or two magnified by tragic fears, that feed on the mysteries of science. How many years must pass before we can hope to see the peoples of the world back to anything like normal?