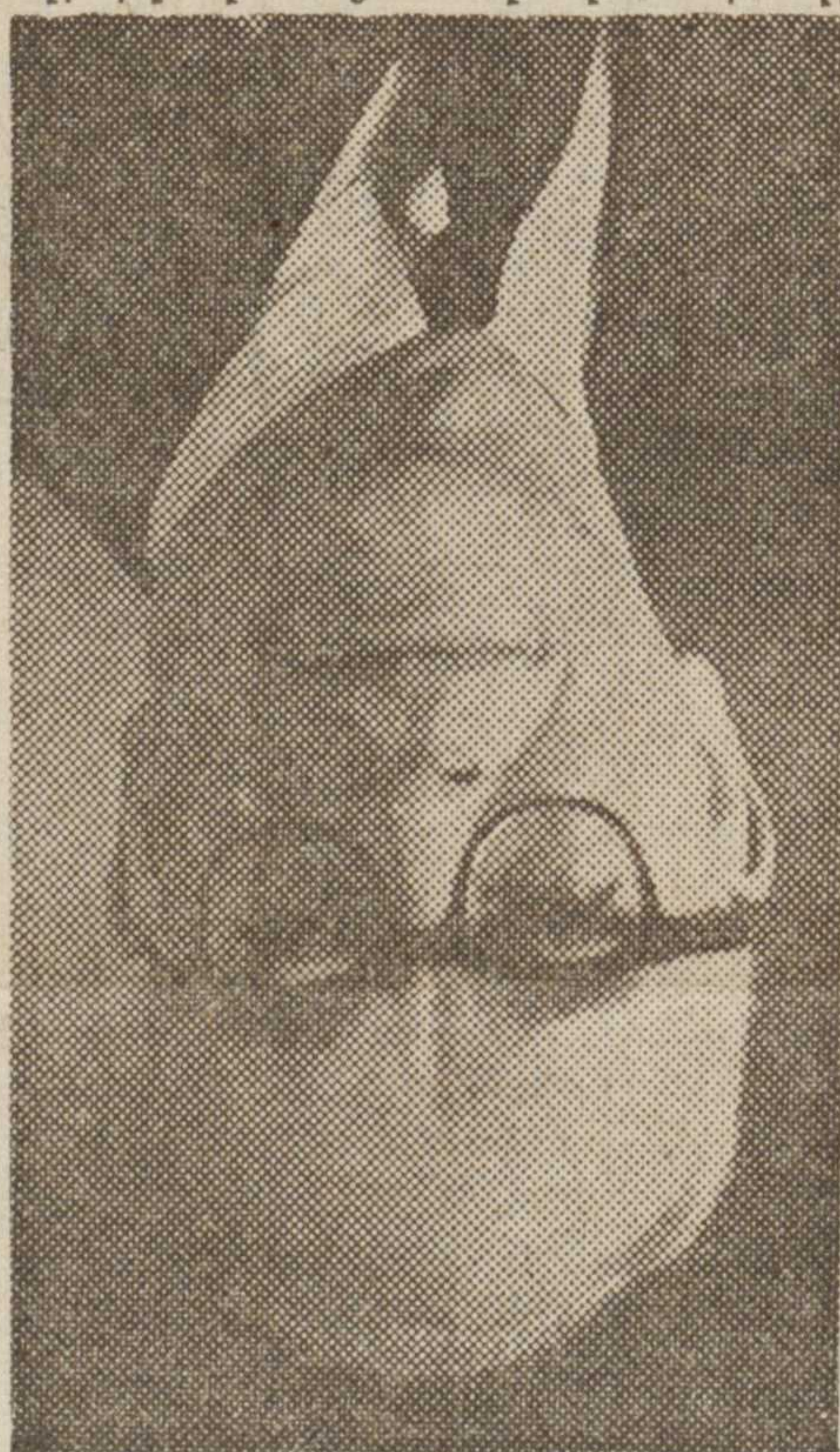


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Russia's Heritage Of Blood Drenched Terror

By JOHN P. GARDINER

This is the fourteenth of a series of articles on the Mongol origin of Russian Czarist and Communist attitudes, institutions and practices. One of the very few words of Mongol origin which have crept crabwise into the English language is the word "horde," currently taken to mean a great and unorganized swarm of people or things — mostly the former. "Horde" is derived from the Mongol word "orda" meaning a politico-military unit or encampment. Batu Khan's five widely-separated armies with which he invaded Europe in the mid-13th century probably totalled not more than 150,000 warriors.



It was, without a shadow of a doubt the extraordinary mobility of these fierce, hard-riding horsemen from our "Center" which greatly magnified their numbers in the eyes of medieval Europe. A combination of the three spare houses possessed by every Mongol plus the efficient liaison between armies and their detachments maintained by the "arrow messengers," of which we have previously written, made possible rapid concentration on any field of battle over distances which seemed incredible in comparison with the ponderous and sluggish movements of Europe's heavily-armored chivalry. So it is easy to see why the word "horde" has come to mean "swarm" or, perhaps better "untold numbers."

Now, as we wrote last week, Batu Khan never returned to Mongolia for the "kuraltai" to elect a new Kakhan but settled down with his armies, their herds, families and loot between the lower Volga and the Don with Sarai on the former as his central focus. And it was from this area that Russia was completely dominated for well over 200 years. China with her age-old culture has time and time again absorbed her less-cultured nomad conquerors and the Yuen Dynasty of Kublai Khan and his Mongols were no exception. But in Russia of the 13th century, the Mongols of The Golden Horde had ridden into a de facto cultural vacuum if one excepts the feeble efforts of Kievian Russia in this area. In point of fact, 13-century Russia was almost an exact duplicate of Mongolia before the coming of Genghis Khan. The sole basic difference between the two lay in the fact that Russian society such as it was, was basically agricultural with fixed towns, cities and wooden fortresses as opposed to the ever-fluid nomad Mongols. Sarai on the lower reaches of the Volga was utilized by the latter as a center for trade, but primarily for the collection of tribute from their subjects. Batu himself, his sons and grandsons adhered to the traditional Mongol pattern, moving North for summer pastures, returning to winter quarters in the fall while, at all times maintaining iron-handed control of their Russian subjects at every level of society. This total dominion was effected by the lords of The Golden Horde by deputizing Russian princes as their tax-gathering agents, seeing to it that each annually delivered his allotted quota of

"The order was literally obeyed. When the town was taken and the population massacred, the Orlok (task force commander), already on the return journey, sent back 2,000 of his men to make sure that there was no one alive among the ruins. Actually these emissaries found 3,000 survivors, who were promptly slain. When the Mongol forces had withdrawn for the second time, from the last lurking places in the city whose armed garrison alone had consisted of more than 100,000 men, there crept forth 16 persons, who were joined after a time by 24 more from the suburbs. These 40 were all that were left alive."

Terror, then, was the cement which held the domains of The Golden Horde together even as it is the wholesale employment of utterly merciless terror which holds the Soviet Union together in our own day. Now it is the ubiquitous M.V.D. Earlier, the "Okrama", the secret police of the Russian Czars, the "Oprichnina," of Ivan The Terrible, all in unbroken continuity from the blood-drenched Mongols of The Golden Horde.

Terror, judiciously applied, was one of the more important features of all Mongol conquests as it was in all lands they had overrun. Every campaign was preceded by a veritable bloodbath with a few stricken survivors left alive to spread the news into as yet, unconquered territory. Let the inhabitants of any conquered city revolt against its Mongol overlords, complete annihilation was the swift and savage answer. According to Michael Pravdin, the city of Herat in Khwarizm-mia revolted, murdering its Mongol governor. He quotes Genghis Khan as giving the order, "Since dead men have come to life again, I command you (the commander of his task force) to strike their heads from their bodies." Pravdin goes on to write: